

Israel 'explains' entry permit episode

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Israeli embassy here said Sunday that lack of time to process the application for entry permits was the reason behind the delay at the King Hussein Bridge on Friday that prompted a group of over 500 Jordanians to abandon a visit to the West Bank town of Nablus to attend celebrations marking the launching of Palestinian self-rule there. The embassy said the request made to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) by the group was received late on Thursday. The second secretary at the Israeli embassy Shalom Tourgeman, said the request left no time for the Israeli authorities to process it and issue the necessary permits. Mr. Tourgeman said the Israeli civil administration has informed the PNA that it was impossible to issue the necessary permits within such short space of time, adding that this information had been broadcast in the Israeli media.

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Talks between unions and government described as useful but dispute unsettled

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and leaders of professional associations, with whom the government has been at loggerheads over the peace process with Israel, was "useful" even though it did not produce a tangible agreement on the role of the unions in public life.

While the prime minister insisted on the role of professional associations should be limited to the upgrading of the profession itself, the associations' leaders reiterated that the issue of normalising relations with Israel could not be separated from their work.

"The government is keen on respecting human rights and public freedoms," Sharif

Zeid was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying in the meeting held at the Prime Ministry. However, "the professional associations have to dedicate their time and effort to the profession itself" instead of being involved in politics, the prime minister said.

"The prime minister's position was determined and clear," Ali Abul Ragheb, minister of trade and industry, told the Jordan Times. "The government will not take any measures against and has no interest in clashing with the associations as long as they don't use the associations as forums for political action."

"The message was very clear," Mr. Abul Ragheb added. "If anyone wants to practise politics, then he should do it through the political parties."

But Bar Association president, Kamal Nasser, said the associations were not attempting to replace political parties nor were they practising politics. He said that the issue of normalisation with Israel was part of their work and had direct influence on the profession.

"We are not political parties and we don't want to replace them," Mr. Nasser said. "But we have the right as individuals to express our opinions freely."

Since Jordan signed peace with Israel in October, 1994, the professional associations have been at loggerheads with the government.

The Engineers Association and the Medical Associations in particular warned their members against participating in the Middle East and

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Peres is likely to meet Syrian demand for Golan sovereignty

Combined agency dispatches

IF THE NEW round of talks between Israel and Syria go well, Prime Minister Shimon Peres plans to announce Israel's recognition of Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Mr. Peres and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced on Saturday that the deadlocked negotiations would resume on Dec. 27 for a three-day meeting just outside Washington.

The daily Maariv newspaper said that if the first round of meetings between Israel and Syria go well, Mr. Peres will announce that Israel recognises Syrian sovereignty over the Golan and will pre-

sent parliament with an announcement of intent to withdraw from the strategic plateau.

Maariv said that Labour Party leaders were preparing for the possibility of early elections if Israel and Syria reach a peace agreement. Elections are currently scheduled to be held in October.

Mr. Peres has adopted the commitment of his predecessor to announce a national referendum or early elections will be held to determine the Israeli people's opinion on such a deal with Syria.

The daily Davar said Mr. Peres hoped to reach a declaration of principles with Syria by sometime in January.

The announcement of re-

newal of talks followed three days of shutting by Mr. Christopher between Syria and Israel, where he got an okay from both sides to announce the resumption of negotiations.

"I think we have a new intensity and the talks are of a new quality, but there are going to be many difficulties ahead," Mr. Christopher told reporters following a final meeting with Foreign Minister Ehud Barak.

According to the plan announced Saturday, the two sides will meet for three days, break for a week to consult with higher officials at home, and then resume for another three-day round.

Israeli reports on Sunday

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PNA police launch sweep for armed gang in Nablus

NABLUS (Agencies) — Palestinian police carried out a vast manhunt Sunday in this newly autonomous town for an armed gang held responsible for three killings and a wave of punishment shootings, Palestinian sources said.

Witnesses reported sporadic shooting in the town Sunday as the police carried out a street-by-street search for Ahmad Tabuk, leader of the armed gang which has been terrorising Nablus since March.

No one was reported wounded in the shooting. The sources said some 20 people had been arrested in the sweep so far. "We have been carrying out a security operation for

the past three days and have not yet finished," a senior Palestinian official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Our aim is to arrest the leaders of this armed group," he said. The official confirmed that there had been arrests, but would not provide any details.

Mr. Tabuk, 31, claims to represent the Fateh Hawks, an armed wing of Yasser Arafat's Fateh organisation during the 1987 to 1994 Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule.

But following the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) leading to Palestinian autonomy in most of the West Bank, Mr.

Tabuk's gang turned to banditry, Palestinian sources said.

The gunmen are blamed for killing three people and wounding 25 others — many of them "knee-capped" in punishment shootings — as part of a protection racket imposed on Nablus businesses.

Mr. Tabuk has also set his group up as a protector of public morality, punishing local residents accused of deviance.

PNA police officers took control of Nablus, the biggest West Bank town, before dawn on Wednesday, ending 28 years of occupation by the Israeli army.

Bosnian Serb assembly balks at accepting peace agreement

JAHORINA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — The Bosnian Serb assembly said Sunday it would not endorse the Bosnian peace accord for the time being, the Serb SRNA news agency reported.

Deputies said a report drawn up by Serb envoys to peace talks in Dayton, Ohio and later in London and Paris was "unclear," and they asked that a written report be drawn up for the next assembly session.

There was no word on when that session might take place.

The peace accord, formally signed by the leaders of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia in Paris on Thursday, was heavily criticised by several lawmakers who implicitly accused Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who officially represented them at the talks, of "treason."

But as the deputies continued their heated debate at a meeting of Mount Jahorina near Sarajevo, observers did not rule out an about-turn.

The head of the Bosnian Serb delegation to the peace talks, Nikola Koljevic, earlier briefed the deputies on the negotiations and sought to reassure them on the status of Sarajevo.

Under the peace deal, Serb suburbs of Sarajevo are to be placed under the control of the Muslim-Croat federation. This idea was massively rejected by Sarajevo Serbs in a referendum last Tuesday.

Mr. Koljevic told the parliament that countries which attended the London conference last week had pledged "to assist the reconstruction of the two entities" which now made up Bosnia — the Croat-Muslim federation with 51 per cent of the territory and the Serb republic

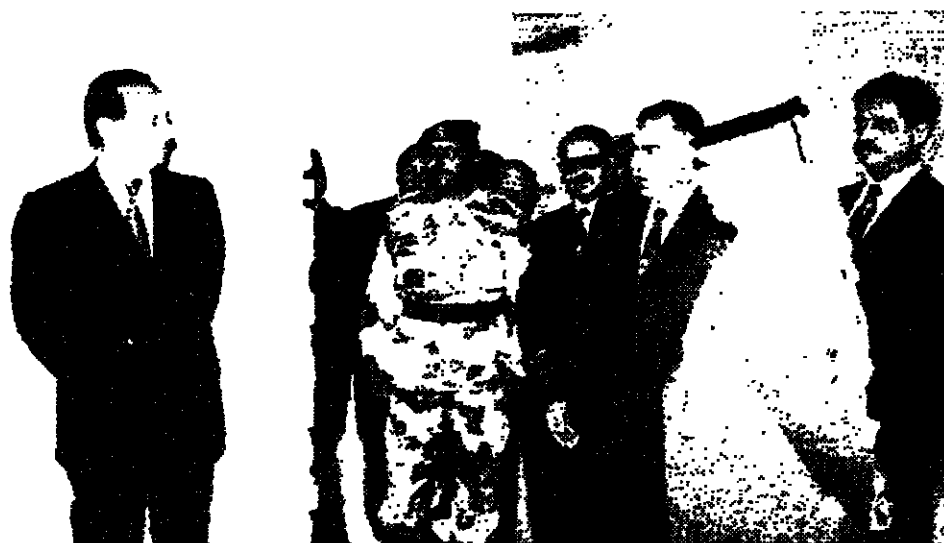
with 49 per cent.

He said the 120,000 Sarajevo Serbs had "the right to remain there (Sarajevo) until the construction of a new city or to leave."

Serb leaders are planning, with Belgrade's backing, to build on Serb-held territory a new city for Sarajevo Serbs who do not want to be ruled by the federation. They hope to receive international financial backing for it.

The deputies were also to approve the new Serb republic's government which Rajko Kasagic was asked to form after his predecessor Dusan Kozic was sacked for inefficiency in October.

Miroslav Vjestica, a deputy from northwestern Bosnia, was one of several deputies who slammed the peace accord as an "act of capitulation."



His Majesty King Hussein, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Hamza, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and other officials, on Sunday visits the palace of his late grandfather, King Abdullah, which is being turned into a major museum (Petra photo)

King visits grandfather's palace being turned into major museum

MAAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday visited the palace of the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the founder of the Kingdom, in Maan City and inspected work carried out by a national committee entrusted with restoring the palace in cooperation with Muta University.

The King, who was accompanied on the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Ham-

zeh, was briefed by Muta University President Abdul Rahman Atiyat on the goals and progress of the renovation works.

Dr. Atiyat said the restoration works aim to preserve the architectural and historic significance of the palace.

Dr. Atiyat said the committee completed the first phase of the project at a total cost of JD 250,000. The palace will be turned into a

national museum depicting the struggle of the Hashemite family since the launch of the Great Arab Revolt.

Wares used by the late King Abdullah as well as historical photos and documents dating back to the early days of the Emirate of Transjordan will be exhibited at the palace.

Part of the palace will be

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Yemen, Eritrea battle for key Red Sea island

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemen and Eritrea fought a fierce battle on Sunday with warships and aircraft over disputed islands in the key Red Sea shipping lane.

Yemeni military sources said Eritrean forces were firing at Yemeni positions on the Red Sea island of Greater Hanish from warships but have not landed yet.

The sources said Yemen had suffered dead and wounded in the clash, but gave no figures.

In Cairo, the Arab League called on Eritrea to pull its forces back from the island.

The Arab League condemns Eritrea's aggressive act on the island of Hanish Al Kabir which has cost the lives of several Yemenis, a senior league official told reporters.

He said the pan-Arab organisation called on Eritrean forces to withdraw from the island to "reestablish the status quo," and for the two countries to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.

A correspondent saw 12 wounded Yemeni soldiers in one ward at a hospital in Sanaa and hospital sources said there were more. There was no immediate word on

King phones Saleh

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Sunday telephoned Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the situation in Yemen and the latest developments in the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute. King Hussein stressed the need for Yemen and Eritrea to settle their dispute through brotherly dialogue and understanding. Wishing the Yemeni people progress and prosperity, King Hussein expressed his desire to meet with Mr. Saleh soon.

Eritrean casualties.

An official Yemeni statement issued earlier on Sunday accused Eritrean troops of "treacherous aggression and piracy... violating territorial waters and threatening security, stability and international shipping in the Red Sea area."

Officials said the attack began Friday when four Israeli-made speedboats deployed Eritrean forces on the island, which is halfway between the two countries and claimed by

both. Civilian ships brought more troops to the island where 500 Yemeni troops have been garrisoned since tension flared in November, officials said.

There was no immediate comment from Eritrea. Russian-made Sukhoi-20 fighter-bombers flew sorties from Sanaa every hour to back up troops on the island, which is 32 kilometres off the coast, officials said. Yemeni naval vessels were also dispatched.

A government spokesman demanded a withdrawal of the Eritrean forces and vowed that Yemen would defend its "sovereignty over land and territorial waters."

"Eritrean forces staged a cowardly attack and act of piracy against Hanish Al Kabir," the spokesman said. He said Eritrea had issued a warning on Nov. 11 to Yemeni civilians, telling them "to leave the island (along with the troops) and stop work on" building a tourist resort.

The spokesman called on Asmara "to immediately end

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Kuwait: Rapprochement with Jordan needs wider support

KUWAIT (R) — The Kuwaiti government would need widespread domestic support for any rapprochement with Jordan because the countries' five-year-old rift cannot be mended by diplomats alone, a senior official said on Sunday.

"Any political decision cannot be taken only through the Foreign Ministry," Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Suleiman Al Shaheen said in a briefing for reporters. "It must also include different factors — the (Kuwaiti) people, the parliament, the press," he said. A final decision to restore full relations could only be taken with the backing of wide sections of society.

The foreign ministers of Kuwait and Jordan are very keen to solve the issues between the two countries practically and without emotion," Mr. Shaheen said. "When our decision is finally taken to resume (full) relations with Jordan, we will go full speed ahead."

This month Kuwait restored normal telephone links between the two countries. Kuwait also signalled

opposition to Jordanian efforts to unite Iraqi opposition groups, saying Iraqis could solve their own problems themselves.

Mr. Shaheen said "un-calculated interference" by outside forces in Iraq's internal affairs could hasten Iraq's disintegration.

He declined to comment directly on Jordanian efforts to help Iraqi opposition groups map a new direction for their country.

But he said in general remarks in answer to questions about Jordan's plans: "We do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any country, including Iraq."

"It (Iraq's future) is the decision of the Iraqi people and is not in the hands of other countries or regimes. The 18 million Iraqis are capable of solving their own problems."

"We feel sensitive towards other countries' interference in the internal affairs of Iraq because by doing so they are emphasising further the concept of division."

King Hussein, saying he felt he had to do something to alleviate suffering in Iraq,

called on Saturday for a meeting of Iraqis opposed to President Saddam Hussein to plan a new future for their country.

The King has promoted the concept of a federation grouping the three major components of the population — the Kurds in the north, the Sunni Muslims who dominate under President Saddam, and the Shiite Muslims who are the largest group.

Mr. Shaheen said the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman wanted Iraq's territorial unity maintained and opposed to any division of Iraq on ethnic or religious grounds.

"We find that GCC resolutions emphasise Iraq's unity, because, God forbid, if it is divided it will affect not only Kuwait but the whole Gulf region, which itself needs more unity and progress," Mr. Shaheen said.

But he added: "We assure our non-interference in this matter. We wish not to have an opinion on the internal affairs of other countries."

Communists ahead in Russian far east

MOSCOW (AFP) — Preliminary results from the far east of Russia put the Communist Party first with 20.9 per cent of the vote, and the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party second with 16.2 per cent in parliamentary elections Sunday. The results, for one per cent of the Russian electorate, were given by the central electoral commission. The liberal Yabloko bloc came third with seven per cent, the centrist Women of Russia next with six per cent, then the government party Our Home is Russia with 5.7 per cent. These early estimates from the far east pointed to big gains for the Communist Party and a drubbing for President Boris Yeltsin's government party. The far east, where some areas are 10 time zones ahead of Moscow, was the first region to vote in the elections to the state Duma, the lower house of parliament. It is home to about 20 per cent of Russia's population. Echo Moscow radio quoted unofficial estimates that the Communist Party had won 25 per cent in the far eastern region, followed by 15 per cent each for the Yabloko and the Nationalist Congress of Russian Communities.

Jordan seeks to block 'foreign influence' on Iraqi dissident groups

By Tareq Momani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti said on Sunday Jordan was open to the idea of hosting a conference by the Iraqi opposition groups with the aim of detaching the opposition from any international influence that might undermine Iraqi sovereignty or the integrity of Iraqi soil.

Speaking to the press following a meeting with the Lower House of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Kabariti said no date was yet set for any such conference, whose formula and mechanism were not yet defined.

He said Jordan always aims to preserve the integrity of Iraqi territory and the unity of Iraqi people, stressing that neither Jordan nor its leadership has any personal ambi-

tions in Iraq. The minister also stressed Jordan's keenness to lift the siege imposed on the Iraqi people since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and to support it through its ordeal to enable it to retrieve its focal role at the Arab and international levels.

He said his meeting with the Lower House Committee was comprehensive and frank, and that it dealt with various Arab issues, including Jordan's ties with other Arab countries, the Middle East peace process and developments in the region. Committee rapporteur Nazih Annammar said the meeting took place at a request by committee chairman Abdullah Ensour.

He said Mr. Kabariti talked in detail on Jordan's stand on Iraq and the King-

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U.S. defence secretary visits Jordan Jan. 3-5

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry is scheduled to visit Jordan Jan. 3-5 for talks expected to finalise details of American military assistance to the Kingdom, an official source said Monday.

Mr. Perry's visit, during which the Pentagon chief is expected to hold talks with His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker as well as senior Armed Forces officers, will cap a dialogue that has been going on for more than one year after Jordan requested American military help.

Several senior American military officers visited Jordan in the past few months. The top-ranking among them was Admiral Arthur William Owens, deputy chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who visited Jordan in November. According to official sources, the talks these officers had in Amman covered Jordan's military needs. Jordan has sought warplanes and

air defence equipment as well as military transport vehicles and personnel carriers, according to unconfirmed reports.

The U.S. which was once the Kingdom's major supplier of defence requirements, provided Jordan with "some" military equipment and vehicles after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in October 1994. Details of the supplies were not immediately available.

Jordan and the U.S. have held several joint military exercises.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was reported to have lobbied the Clinton administration on behalf of Jordan during his recent visit to Washington.

Washington's commitment to help Jordan upgrade its defence capabilities was reaffirmed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday. Addressing a press conference at Aqaba following talks with King Hussein, Mr. Christopher said that the administration of President Bill Clinton was "determined

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Japan grants \$80m loan to Jordan and reschedules \$152m

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Japan and Jordan on Sunday signed two agreements under which Tokyo rescheduled \$152 million of Amman's debts and granted the Kingdom a soft loan of about \$80 million to help it increase its foreign currency reserves and adjust the balance of payments.

The first agreement, signed by Minister of Finance Basel Jaradneh and Japanese Ambassador Takayuki Kimura, rescheduled \$101 million of Jordan's government debts to a period of 20 years with a grace of 10 years and \$51 million in the Kingdom's commercial debts for 20 years with a grace of five years.

The accord came in line with a memorandum of understanding Jordan signed with the Paris Club of creditor governments in June 1994 under which the creditors agreed to reschedule a total of \$1.2 billion of Jordan's debts.

Japan holds about \$1.8 billion of Jordan's foreign debts of \$5.6 billion. The accord signed on Sunday raises to about \$400 million the amount of debts rescheduled with Japan under agreements concluded in 1989 and 1993.

The Japanese embassy said the rescheduling accord aims at "alleviating the Jordanian burden of debt services, enabling at the same time the new in-flows from financial sources necessitated in the years to come for large-scale

development projects, thus contributing to peace building both in Jordan and in the area."

The second accord signed on Sunday, by Ambassador Kimura and Minister of Planning Rima Khafaf, provides for Japan to grant a soft loan of about \$80 million to help Jordan finance development programmes and increase foreign exchange reserves.

The assistance, which comes under a co-financing arrangement with the World Bank, is part of a \$215 million package that was announced during the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit in Amman. Agreement on the assistance was reached when Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama visited Jordan in September.

An \$80 million agreement was signed during the MENA summit on the co-financing arrangement. Japan also signed a separate \$135 million loan accord with the Kingdom under an arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The \$135 million was credited to the IMF as partial settlement of Jordan's dues to that world body.

The Japanese embassy said the latest loan from Tokyo's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) was being "extended in the co-financing operation with the World Bank's Economic Reform and Development Loan

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هذه احدى النسخ

Student warned of Rabin murder two months in advance

LONDON (AP) — A student from a religious seminary warned that fellow students were discussing whether to assassinate Yitzhak Rabin just weeks before the assassination took place, an Israeli extremist expert said.

"He said he wanted to talk to me right away because he was afraid people were now considering the possibility of the assassination of (Foreign Minister Shimon) Peres and Mr. Rabin," Ehud Sprinzak, Israel's foremost expert on Jewish extremism, said of the call he received in September.

Yigal Amir, who opposed Mr. Rabin's policies of releasing land to the Palestinians, confessed to shooting the Israeli prime minister dead on Nov. 4 after a peace rally.

Mr. Sprinzak told the British Broadcasting Corporation he warned Mr. Rabin after the call, but the prime minister refused to take threats from Jews seriously. Israel's security service reportedly ignored other warnings from one of Amir's fellow university students last summer.

Mr. Sprinzak said the caller identified himself only as studying at the Joseph Lives On Seminary in the West Bank city of Nablus. Dan Marantz, a former student, told the Associated Press after the assassination that Amir, 25, was known to visit the seminary.

Mr. Sprinzak asked the caller if he had rabbinical approval. "He said there is no longer any problem with the rabbis."

Police have questioned rabbis about whether anyone gave Amir the go-ahead, but no one has been arrested. Some rabbis had defined Mr. Rabin as a persecutor or a collaborator, both terms that would have brought about a death sentence according to ancient Jewish law.

The Nablus seminary's principal, Eli Rosenberg, told the AP last month that his teachers would never have counselled Mr. Rabin's death. He would have defined Mr. Rabin as an "unholy conspirator," but would have avoided terms that implied a death sentence.

Nablus, which was handed over to the Palestinians last week, is the largest city in the West Bank and was among the most hostile to Israeli rule.

Extremist Jews set up the seminary in the city's casbah in the mid-1980s, saying that it marked the site of the tomb of Biblical Patriarch Joseph, although the area was unsettled in Biblical days and the nearest Biblical town, Shechem, is several kilometres away.

The BBC documentary also featured scenes at Amir's home in the Tel Aviv suburb of Herzliya. It showed Amir's mother, Geula, talking with Yigal on the phone, although she had previously said she had cut her son off.

"For me? It's an upheaval for the whole family, who cares about me?" she yells at him, and then sob: "I love you."

Afterwards, she speaks with her other son, 27-year-old Hagai, who has been charged with conspiring to kill Mr. Rabin. "One wasn't enough, you had to be a partner," she says. "I thought you'd go to jail, you'd moderate your views, I see you've become more extreme."

Amir's father, Shlomo, said his son had brought up assassinating Mr. Rabin a year earlier at a Sabbath dinner.

"He asked, is he a persecutor?" recalled the elder Amir. "I said, there is no basis for that argument, it doesn't belong to the issue."

Mrs. Amir told the BBC she blamed her son not only for the death of Mr. Rabin, but for causing deep rifts in Israeli society.

"Since the incident, not only has polarisation grown, but it has become ugly, it's become intolerable, it has created a great and sad gap," she said.

Amir's two sisters, Hadas 21, and Gittit, 15, were more sympathetic.

"I think only Gali knew the meaning of to love your country, to love Israel, to do anything for your country," said Hadas. "He was the only one who had the guts to do it."

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Israel spends \$100m to revamp Nazareth

NAZARETH (AP) — Now that Israel is giving Bethlehem to the Palestinians, it is spending \$100 million to turn the town of Jesus' youth — Nazareth — into a tourist attraction.

Nestled in a horseshoe-shaped valley in the Galilee in northern Israel, the city of 60,000 needs some work. Its roads are often clogged with traffic jams and a maze of TV antennas hide church steeples from view.

"It's got an image problem," said tour guide Yadin Roman.

Though some one million tourists visit this city every year, Mayor Ramez Jarraisi said most only stay a few hours, long enough to visit the religious and historical sites.

The government hopes to double the number of tourists by the end of the century. It plans to invest \$100 million to widen streets, renovate the market and restore 19th-century Venetian-style homes that have ceiling frescoes and red tile roofs.

The "Nazareth 2000" project will add 3,000 hotel rooms to the existing 600 and develop attractions to keep visitors busy "for a few days at least," Mr. Jarraisi said.

The facelift for Nazareth comes at a time when Israeli forces are pulling out of the West Bank town of Bethlehem, which tradition says is the site of Jesus' birth. This Christmas will be the first one celebrated under Palestinian rule in 28 years.

"The withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Bethlehem brings the focus of Christmas celebrations in Israel back to Nazareth," said Mayor Jarraisi.

The project represents the largest investment Israel has made in the Arab sector, said David Harnik, head of the Israel government Tourist Corporation, overseeing the project.

One-fifth of Israeli citizens are Arab, and the Labour Party has depended on Arab legislators since 1992 for its parliamentary majority and for support in the Mideast peace process.

Iraqi children face death — CARE

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraq is currently facing a major battle to prevent the deaths of thousands of children from severe malnutrition, according to CARE Australia representative who has just returned from the country.

Speaking on his arrival in Amman, after a week-long visit to Iraq CARE Australia's Middle East regional director, Robert Yallop, said the humanitarian situation in the country was horrific.

"I spent several days visiting paediatric hospitals, schools and water treatment facilities and the situation was appalling. I have visited

Iraq regularly over the past four and a half years and this time have been shocked and appalled by the present state of suffering.

"The humanitarian situation has been deteriorating steadily over the past five years of sanctions. The world has forgotten what is happening to Iraq's children.

"The situation has deteriorated now to the point where the international community must act immediately to prevent thousands of children dying from malnutrition.

Mr. Yallop, who established CARE's humanitarian operations in Iraq after the

Gulf war, said he was deeply shocked by the situation facing families, especially children.

"I have a three-year-old son who weighs about thirteen kilos," Mr. Yallop said. "I saw children the same age as my son in hospitals in Iraq who weighed five and six kilos. It simply should not be."

With the support of the Dutch government, CARE Australia is immediately starting a supplementary feeding project in paediatric hospitals in 14 provinces in central and southern Iraq.

Mr. Yallop said. CARE will provide milk, cheese and high energy biscuits to approximately 4,500 malnourished children each day, for the coming six months, he said.

"Five years of sanctions have prevented Iraq from selling oil and have resulted in a crisis in the supply of food and medicine within Iraq," said Mr. Yallop. "Only when Iraq can sell oil freely and purchase food and medicine can the humanitarian disaster end."

"This should not be viewed as a political issue, but simply an issue of humanity."

Ahmar confirms 'tribal clashes' on border

DUBAI (R) — A Saudi newspaper on Sunday quoted a senior Yemeni official as saying tribal clashes took place recently along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni Parliament, told Arab News: "The recent fighting between members of some tribes along the border will not affect the work of different panels assigned to draw borders between the two countries."

Sheikh Ahmar, in the first official admission of trouble along the border, did not

elaborate in his remarks to the English-language Saudi daily.

Reports earlier this week by sources close to Yemen spoke of fresh clashes along the disputed Saudi-Yemeni border.

The Saudi Defence Ministry later said the reports were "absolutely untrue."

Sheikh Ahmar arrived in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Saturday at the head of a senior Yemeni delegation for talks with Saudi officials on the disputed border.

Sheikh Ahmar and Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan head the Saudi-Yemeni

higher committee entrusted with reviewing progress by several side committees charged with demarcating the border and boosting economic and other ties.

Sanna and Riyadh formed the committees after reaching a border accord in February which followed three months of clashes and tension along the border, parts of which are potentially rich in oil and gas.

Arab News quoted Prince Sultan as saying the higher committee's meeting "was not held due to any difficulties or obstacles faced by joint panels set up for settling the border dispute."

But he said it was agreed during Saturday's talks to set up new follow-up panels under the higher committee and that they would start "their mission within a few months," Arab News reported.

Prince Sultan said the border talks were "moving in the right direction in the interest of the two sides."

The newspaper also quoted Yemeni Interior Minister Hussein Arab, who is accompanying Sheikh Ahmar as saying political will and good intentions would "help resolve outstanding problems."

Moroccan dissident said under house arrest

RABAT (R) — Morocco's leading Islamic fundamentalist Abdalhamid Yassine has been stopped from meeting supporters while under house arrest, his movement said on Saturday.

Mr. Yassine, 67, who leads the Al Adl wal Ihsane (Justice and Charity) movement, has been under house arrest for six years and had been allowed to meet supporters on Thursday and Friday for the first time, supporters said.

The Moroccan government has never recognised that Mr. Yassine was under house arrest.

Moroccan officials were not immediately available for comment.

"We were informed by security officers that Yassine is no more allowed to leave his home, cannot meet his supporters and visits are forbidden," a statement in Arabic faxed to a news agency said.

He had been allowed to meet his relatives on Thursday and conducted a religious sermon before hundreds of supporters on Friday at Al Quds Mosque in Sale, the twin city of Rabat, for the first time under house arrest.

"Unfortunately Sheikh Yassine was finally free for two days only... the situation of our leader returns to square one," the statement said.

Visits were allowed to Mr. Yassine's villa on Thursday but restrictions were reimposed on Friday afternoon, supporters said.

Mr. Yassine has been allowed visits by dentists and doctors but all visits have had to be cleared by the security services, according to supporters.

Mr. Yassine, listed by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, said he would call a news conference on Monday.

Al Dustour acquitted in slander case filed by Parliament member

By Ghaila Ahl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first instance court on Saturday acquitted the Jordan Press and Publishing Company, which publishes the Al Dustour daily from all charges levelled against it by member of the Lower House of Parliament Fouzi Tueimeh for publishing an article and a caricature which he alleged were slanderous to him. Yasser Sunnuqrot, the attorney representing the newspaper, said Sunday.

Mr. Tueimeh's attorney said that he would appeal the verdict.

Mr. Sunnuqrot told the Jordan Times that Dr. Tueimeh had sued Al Dustour two years ago and sought JD 1 million in compensation for financial and moral damages that he said he incurred as a result of the publication of the article and cartoon.

Mr. Sunnuqrot said that the newspaper did not violate the Press and Publications Law, and stressed that neither the article nor the cartoon mentioned Dr. Tueimeh's name and did not have anything to do with him or any other person.

However, he added, the article was geared towards raising public awareness of the importance of elections, and that people should look for the truth without always believing slogans.

Mr. Sunnuqrot added that defence witnesses were experts in journalism and proved that the article carried general information which was meant to raise people's awareness. They also said that cartoons usually have different interpretations, and this one did not hurt anyone.

"Our witnesses were very educated people, university doctors, professors and journalists. They all proved that the article was general," in nature, said Mr. Sunnuqrot.

He said that the cartoon included a character called "Um Fouzi," (Fouzi's mother), and that Dr. Tueimeh had thought it was meant against him, but then

it was proved that his mother does not carry this name.

Dr. Tueimeh's attorney, Hanna Naddah, said his client was mentioned by name in the article and the cartoon and there were evidence and indications that prove this.

"This article was not against anyone but (Dr. Tueimeh)," he said.

Dr. Naddah said he would appeal at the Court of Cassation.

"We have a very good reason to appeal... we have a chance of succeeding," Dr. Naddah added.

Nabil Al Sharif, chief editor at Al Dustour, said his newspaper publishes general issues, and the cartoon and the article were not meant to slander Dr. Tueimeh.

He added that he respected the judicial integrity and was happy with the verdict as it upheld the freedom of the press.

"I am happy with the result as this is a support of the freedom of the press," he added.

Rain-lashed UAE takes census

By Rama Sabbagh
Reuter

DUBAI — Government officials, some using boats and helicopters to reach remote areas cut off by the heaviest rain in living memory, fanned out across the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday to count a population in which three in every four is a foreigner.

Some 6,500 census-takers were collecting information in the UAE's fourth national census since 1971 when seven Arab emirates collectively known as the Trucial States formed a federation.

The last census in 1985 put the population at 1,622,464, from 180,226 in 1968, an increase due to an oil boom in

which foreign labourers and professionals flocked to the Gulf in the early 1970s.

Unofficial figures estimated the total population at 2.23 million in 1992. Some 526,280 were UAE nationals and the rest expatriates, mainly Asians, who transformed the collection of desert sheikhdoms into a modern state built with petrodollars.

"I hail the spirit of the census-takers who, despite the prevailing weather conditions, have showed their willingness to start the process," said Mohammad Abdul Aziz Al Swaidi, director of the Central Census Department at the Ministry of Planning.

"All people present in the UAE — nationals, residents

and visitors — will be counted over the coming 10 days based on the night of Dec. 16-17," he said. UAE nationals and diplomats living abroad would also be counted.

The population has been growing by more than five per cent annually over the past four years, down from an average 47 per cent in the early 1970s after foreigners began arriving to take up menial or skilled work which nationals were either unwilling or unqualified to do.

Economic growth in the UAE, a major regional trading and re-export hub, has slowed in recent years because of the general weakness in oil prices in the late 1980s.

U.S. Jewish leader pays landmark visit to Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — An American Jewish leader has visited Kuwait and met the Gulf state's foreign minister in what diplomats said was the first publicly-reported visit by a Jewish organisation.

American Jewish Committee Executive Director David Harris made a one-day visit on Saturday at the invitation of Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the official Kuwait News Agency reported.

They held talks aimed at continuing a relationship forged in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, the agency said late on Saturday.

It was Mr. Harris' first visit to Kuwait and was part of a tour "of the Gulf and Middle East region," the agency said without elaboration.

It did not say whether or not it was the first visit to Kuwait by an American Jewish official, but diplomats said they believed it was.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman declined to comment on the report. The hotel where Mr. Harris was staying said he had already checked out.

"Our special relationship with Kuwait began on Aug. 2, 1990 (the date of Iraq's invasion)," Mr. Harris was quoted as saying.

"We were strongly opposed to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the American Jewish Committee was among the loudest, most persistent and influential voices in encouraging a strong response from the U.S. government."

"A U.S.-led coalition

based in Saudi Arabia ousted Iraqi troops in the six-week Gulf war that ended in February 1991.

Mr. Harris said he and Sheikh Sabah had discussed the Gulf crisis, the Middle East peace process and Bosnia, adding the talks were a continuation of a meeting he had held with Sheikh Sabah on Oct. 5 when Sheikh Sabah was visiting the United Nations.

He said a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation had met the committee in the United States in 1994.

Mr. Harris, accompanied by the committee's director of government and international affairs, Jason Isaacson, also met Kuwait News Agency staff, the agency said.

Mr. Harris' trip follows a landmark visit to neighbouring Saudi Arabia last month by officials of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League, an American Jewish organisation. They met senior Saudi officials.

A number of Gulf states including Qatar have hosted talks between Israeli and Arab officials in meetings related to the Middle East peace process and diplomats said some businessmen in the region have started preparations for direct trade with the Jewish state.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have yet to receive Israeli officials. They say no relations with Israel are possible until a comprehensive and just peace is achieved, including the completion of Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

African ministers plan to discuss Sudan, terrorism

ADDIS ABABA (R) — A 16-nation ministerial committee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on Monday starts what analysts said could be one of the most sensitive and controversial meetings in the history of the OAU.

Sudan's alleged support of terrorism and involvement in the attempt to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last June heads the list of subjects to be discussed, OAU sources said.

The foreign ministers of Egypt and Sudan were in Addis Ababa on Sunday ready to participate in the meeting.

Ethiopia has accused Sudan of sheltering three "Egyptian terrorists" involved in the attempt to assassinate Mr. Mubarak when he arrived in Addis Ababa to attend the annual OAU summit in June.

Ethiopia asked the OAU in September to force Sudan to hand over the gunmen.

The conflict prevention committee, which has condemned Sudan's involvement in the bid to kill Mr. Mubarak, has demanded that it hand over the three in line with the 1964 extradition treaty between the two neighbouring states.

The Islamist-backed government in Khartoum denies Ethiopia's charges, saying only one of the three Egyptians named by Ethiopia entered its territory — and then disappeared.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said at a recent news conference that he expected the OAU to deal with the extradition of "the terrorists" from Sudan.

"We expect the OAU organ of conflict prevention, resolution and management

to deal at the multilateral level with the extradition from Sudan of the three Egyptian terrorists involved in the assassination attempt on President Mubarak," Mr. Meles said.

"If that fails, the only option left to us is to see if there are unilateral options that can be taken," he said without elaborating.

OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim will report on Monday on his recent mission to Sudan to seek extradition of the three, OAU sources said.

The sources said the committee was also expected to discuss Nigeria, although this topic was not on the agenda.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikin was expected to use the opportunity to meet his peers and explain his country's point of view on the crisis that developed following the November execution of nine Nigerian human rights activists.

South Africa, which is pressing for an oil embargo against Nigeria, is not a member of the conflict prevention committee and was not expected to send a delegation to push its campaign against Nigeria. South Africa's initiative has been largely ignored by African states, conference sources said.

The meeting, chaired by Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, is also expected to decide whether to extend or end the mandate of the OAU mission to Rwanda, which expires on Monday.

It will also discuss such African flash-points as Somalia, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone during its two-day meeting, the sources said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 Shelly Duval's Bedtime Stories
14:30 Richie Rick
14:50 Playhouse
15:15 Hey Dad
15:40 Doc — Discover Magazine
16:00 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:30 Sky Trackers
17:00 Children's programme — Fractal
17:30 Scic — Do Hero. Ordinaires
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Nimbus
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Mc Hale's Navy
20:00 Inventions
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 Star Trek
22:00 News in English
22:25 Anna
23:15 The American Chart Show
23:59 New York Undercover

PRAYER TIMES

05:02 Sunrise
06:25 Sunrise
11:52 Dhuhr
14:16 Asr
16:39 Maghreb
18:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweilieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637265
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terre Sancta Church Tel. 622346
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652626
American Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 645457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulkair supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies partly cloudy and winds northwesterly light to

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5/12
Aqaba 10 / 20
Desert 3 / 13
Jordan Valley 9 / 19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 19 Humidity readings: Amman 66 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 734011
Dr. Fakhri Baidieh 63412
Dr. Khalil Al-Tusay 75723
Dr. Osama Al-Husaini 847299
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fouzi pharmacy 776336
Al-Azma pharmacy 637055
Narmukh pharmacy 623672
Al-Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660

Mairouh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IBRD:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Amin Abul Rub 982393
Khalaf pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 617101
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 657777
Fire Brigade 617101
Binod Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 986390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774101
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 643831
RJ Flight Information 06-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn. 642412/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Pakistane Shmebani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848445
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 6641737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Itham, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 6224050
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)902560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)96732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)90990
Irbid
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:28 Sanna (RJ)
08:25 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)

09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:58 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:02 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
10:28 Vienna (OS)
10:30 Kiev (UL)
10:30 London (BA)
10:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
10:50 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:00 Rome (AZ)
05:00 Khartoum (SD)
09:50 Cairo (MS)
12:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
15:30 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:00 Athens, Beirut (OA)
23:05 London (BA)
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
12:00 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:15 Cairo (RJ)
18:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
21:50 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:55 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:00 Rome (AZ)
06:00 Istanbul (TK)
09:50 Beirut, London (BA)
10:40 Beirut (ME)
16:40 Cairo (MS)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 500
Banana (Mukammal) 680
Banana (imported) 850/650
Cabbage 110 / 50
Carrot 250/150
Cauliflower 200 / 120
Cucumbers (large) 200 / 120
Cucumbers (small) 240 / 250
Eggplant (small) 200 / 120
Garlic 750/600
Grape Fruit 220/150
Lemon 250/180
Marrow (large) 240 / 180
Marrow (small) 240 / 180
Onion (green) 220/150
Onion (dry) 230 / 150
Orange 240/180
Pepper (hot) 250 / 180

Siblings sentenced to death for murder

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A man and a woman aged 19 and 29 Sunday were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court for killing a 55-year-old man in Irbid in August of last year.

Nimer Ahmad Faris Bashawi and his sister Hanieh, were found guilty of murdering Jamil Faleh Abdul Kader Azam, Hanieh's husband, at a farm in Neimeh over family problems, court documents said.

According to the court, Hanieh, the mother of four, often quarrelled with her husband. One week before the murder, the victim left his home and went to a farm in Irbid near Neimeh town where he worked as guard, the document said.

On Aug. 16, one day before the murder, the court said, Hanieh and Nimer plotted to kill Jamil "to get rid of him because of the family problem." They went to the farm where Jamil was employed, the document said.

The three had dinner and settled their problem, the court said. According to the court, Jamil went to sleep, and Hanieh and Nimer struck Jamil on the head several times with a meat cleaver, dragged his body outside, dug a hole and buried him in manure.

Hanieh and Nimer went to Al Khaldieh police in Irbid and turned themselves in, each claiming to have committed the crime, the charge sheet said.

On Saturday, the Criminal Court sentenced a 30-year-old man to death for raping

and murdering an Iraqi woman in her house in Sahab in June.

According to court documents, the defendant Ali Hamid went to the home of Salameh Hsoun, a 30-year-old mother of a toddler, and raped her at knife point.

The victim threatened Ali saying that she was going to inform her husband of the rape, the court document said.

The convict told the authorities that he had to kill her to conceal the rape and so he slashed her throat, the document added.

The defendant then fled the house, the document said. He was apprehended by authorities a week later.

Both sentences will be automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation in the next 15 days.

Cabinet approves investment regulation to allow wider foreign ownership

AMMAN (J.T.) — A regulation aimed at attracting foreign investors to Jordan as approved by the Cabinet Saturday evening is expected to open doors to foreign investors and hopefully push the Kingdom's drive to serve as a unique centre for investments in the entire region, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb said Sunday.

The government Saturday evening approved a regulation which allows wider foreign ownership and direct entry into the

Amman Financial Market (AFM), Jordan's stock market, to help attract foreign capital.

The minister said the regulation is in accordance with the Investment Promotion Law which offers non-Jordanian investors the opportunity to explore potential areas for their investments in the Kingdom.

He said non-Jordanian investors will benefit from various incentives provided for under the new investment promotion law.

Minister of Finance Basel Jaraneh said the new regulation helps to serve the system of transparency inherent in the Investment Promotion Law to provide opportunities for substantial foreign investment at a time when investors will also benefit from a reduced tax system, also part of the law.

Parliament passed the Investment Promotion Law in advance of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit last October.

Police arrest man in shooting death of sister

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Officials Sunday disclosed that a 23-year-old man was arrested last week for killing his divorced sister in Jabal Nasser on Dec. 12.

According to Prosecutor General Ali Abu Hujleleh, Mohammad A., turned himself in to police shortly after shooting his sister Intisar A., 28, in the head. The woman died instantly, he added.

Mr. Abu Hujleleh said that Mohammad told police that he killed his divorced sister, who was married and divorced several times, because she "was involved in several immoral relation-

ships during the past six years."

On Dec. 12, the night of the murder, Mr. Abu Hujleleh said, the suspect met his sister at their uncle's home by coincidence, and advised her to live with him or with his father.

"He also advised her to 'change her behaviour,' but she refused and told him that she was free to do what she wanted and to live where she wished."

"An argument erupted, and Mohammad shot his sister in the head," Mr. Abu Hujleleh told the Jordan Times.

According to the prosecutor general, the case will be transferred to the Criminal

Court in two weeks.

Intisar became the 10th woman reportedly killed in a "crime of honour" in the Kingdom this year.

Meanwhile, police Sunday were waiting for autopsy results to determine if an Egyptian man who was found dead in Sweifieh Friday was murdered or died of natural causes, official sources said.

Mohammad Mahmoud Ali, 24, was found dead near Abdul Ruhman Mosque in Sweifieh.

Police said the deceased had injuries to his face and mouth but were unable at the time of the discovery of the body to determine the cause of the death.

'95 road accidents claim 399 lives

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 23,292 road accidents occurred in Jordan between January 1995 and the middle of December, according to Brigadier Nimer Hmoud, head of the traffic division of the Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday.

The accidents resulted in the death of 399 people and the injury of 9,279, Brig. Hmoud said on the eve of Arab Police Day Monday.

The number of accidents registered a 16.2 per cent increase over the number of accidents in the same period last year, he added. The increase in accidents stem from the fact that Jordan has no programmes for spreading awareness among the public about traffic and guidance against accidents, programmes which should start at school, the PSD official said.

It is for this reason that the traffic department has recently taken upon itself this task, and through cooperation with Jordan Television and the press, it has been presenting programmes and lectures on road safety, as well as giving lectures to teachers to spread traffic awareness among school students, Brig. Hmoud said.

The department has also been taking measures to reduce road accidents through

vehicle roadworthiness regulations and by introducing strict rules against violators of traffic laws, especially speeding, he added. Brig. Hmoud said the employment of police helicopters has played a key role in controlling traffic on the main streets of Amman and along the highways.

Speaking on the same occasion, Colonel Nazih Shreideh, director of the PSD narcotics department said the number of Jordanians arrested in drug cases has risen from 60 in 1982 to 704 in 1995.

Over the past five years the PSD has seized a total of 19,886 kilograms (kgs) of hashish, 66 kgs of heroin, 12 kgs of opium, 54 grammes of cocaine and 1,229,076 drug pills, according to Col. Shreideh.

Also Sunday, PSD Director General Abdul Rahman Al Adwan received a number of special police vehicles which came as a gift from the German government to the narcotics division and expressed Jordan's appreciation of the gift.

The German embassy's charge d'affaires Michael Bock, who presented the gift, said he was satisfied with the strong ties of cooperation between Germany and Jordan in security matters.

Abu Rishteh claims interview statements were based on Islamic Sharia rights

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Muslim militant Atta Abu Rishteh, who is being tried at the military court for allegedly slandering His Majesty King Hussein, Sunday told the tribunal that the statements he made to the weekly Al Hiwar newspaper in October, over which he is being charged, were based on interpretations of the Islamic Sharia.

Mr. Abu Rishteh, spokesman of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir Party, repeated his plea of inno-

cence on charges of slandering the King and belonging to an illegal organisation, and told the court that he was only following his right to question officials as embedded in the Sharia.

Asked by the court whether he meant to slander the King in the Oct. 6 interview with Al Hiwar, he said that there was a difference between slander and political accountability "which is the right of every Muslim and one of the main topics in the Islamic jurisdiction."

He did not deny the con-

tents of the interview but said some of the headlines contradicted what he had said. These contradictory headlines, however, were not related to the charges.

One of the remarks said: "What to say to a ruler, official, groups or individuals who see in the U.S. Britain, Russia, France and the rest of the infidel colonial countries their own Gods? This is treason. It is a betrayal of God, his Prophet and the faithful."

Mr. Abu Rishteh's attorneys Mohammad Salameh Dweik and Abdul Fatah

Lafi asked the court to call four witnesses to testify in the case.

The four witnesses, according to the attorneys, include Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi, advisor to the King, Sheikh Abdul Azziz Khayat, a former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Munjid Namarat, reporter of Al Hiwar newspaper who interviewed Mr. Abu Rishteh, and an expert from the Ministry of Information.

Mr. Dweik told the Jordan Times that the defence

asked for Sheikh Tamimi and Khayat to prove that Mr. Abu Rishteh was speaking in accordance to Islamic Sharia and the holy Koran and that he did not intend to slander the King.

He added that the defence's call for an information expert from the Ministry of Information is to explain the legal procedures for the printing of such an article in a weekly newspaper.

Presiding Judge Hafez Amin agreed to call the witnesses for the next session on Dec. 24.

UNDP to provide grant for protection of Aqaba coral reef

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma Bint Ali, chairperson of the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JREDS) and Jörgen Lissner, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sunday signed a memorandum of agreement by which UNDP will provide a grant of \$50,000 to the JREDS to implement a "Comprehensive Public Awareness and Coral Reef Rehabilitation Research and Conservation Project in Aqaba," a UNDP statement said.

This grant is part of the Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme, of the U.N. agency.

The project will be implemented by the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) initiated in 1994 by a group of young Jordanian divers who felt the need to protect Aqaba's rich marine life from further destruction and pollution, the statement said.

The society will cooperate with the Marine Science Station, Aqaba Regional Authority, Naval Forces, Aqaba Ports Corporation, Fishermen's Union, Diving Centres and other NGOs.

According to UNDP, the project objectives are:

Conserving the biodiversity and reducing pollution to international waters;

To educate the general public on the importance of Jordan's marine environment, and how it is globally connected to, and affected by other systems;

To conduct outreach educational programmes for children across the Kingdom, that will demonstrate their relation to the health of the coral reefs;

To advance the knowledge and understanding of the sea, through the promotion of scientific research, data gathering, inventory preparation, and training programmes on the national and regional level;

To develop close working relations between the governmental institutions, industrial developers, scientific and local community, as well as environmentalists, to ensure sustainable



HRH Princess Basma Bint Ali and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative Jörgen Lissner sign a memorandum of agreement for a grant towards the implementation of a coral reef rehabilitation research and conservation project in Aqaba

development and proper resource management; and To establish dialogue and cooperation with international organisations which share similar interests.

The Global Environment Facility — Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) was initiated in Jordan by the UNDP in November 1992, as a pilot phase programme to provide support for small-scale community-based activities that address environmental problems in four priority areas of

global warming, loss of biodiversity, pollution of international waters, depletion of the ozone layer and activities that combat desertification or land degradation as they relate to the four priority areas, according to the statement.

Former GID chief appointed King's advisor

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Tareq Ala'iddin, former General Intelligence Department (GID) Director, has been appointed advisor to His Majesty King Hussein.

Mr. Ala'iddin will be accorded the status and salary of a cabinet minister.

Commenting on his appointment, the veteran public official said: "It is a great honour to receive this appointment from His Majesty. One will always do one's best to serve His Majesty and the country."

He graduated with a degree in law from Cairo University and began private practice. After one and a half years, he began work with the Office of Investigations at the Public Security Department.

A year later, he worked at the Office of Political Inquests, then headed by future GID Director Muhammad Rasoul Keilani. The two departments subsequently fused in 1964 to form the current General Intelligence Department.

Mr. Ala'iddin reached the position of Assistant Director of the GID in 1974 until his promotion to director in 1982. He remained in that office until 1989, when the King appointed him Senator in the 11th Parliament.

Upon the conclusion of his senatorial term in 1993, Mr. Ala'iddin returned to private life until his most recent appointment on Friday as advisor to the King.

TODAY

POPEYES

CHICKEN & BISCUITS

TODAY

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See You There

Shmeisani 601721
Jabel Al - Hussain 079/20921

هنا عن اصل

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Germinal" at the French Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

* Christmas carols by the International Community School Choir at the Marriott and Forte Grand Hotel at 5.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

BAZAAR

* Christmas bazaar at the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ruwag Neighbourhood, Fuheis (until Dec. 22).

LECTURE

* "Orwell's Animal Farm" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Cultural Centre at 5.00 p.m.

Indian parties bash U.S. over nuclear test report

NEW DELHI, (R) - India's opposition parties angrily accused the United States Sunday of trying to suppress the country's atomic weapons capability as an opinion poll showed most Indians would approve of a nuclear test.

The outpouring of support for the nation's independent nuclear arms policy followed a U.S. newspaper report Friday that said India might be preparing its first atomic weapons test in more than two decades.

The Indian government called the New York Times report "highly speculative" but stopped short of an outright denial. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman R. Chidambaram called the report "highly irresponsible."

Diplomats said they had no information indicating a test was imminent but added that the government's statement left the door open to such a possibility.

The reaction of opposition parties and the opinion poll published in India Today magazine underscored a strong national consensus in favour of resisting international efforts, led by Washington, to curb India's nuclear weapons capability.

"This is a question of national security on which there must not be any compromise," Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav said. "The government should fight such pressure from the U.S."

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, but like Pakistan denies having nuclear weapons. U.S. Officials say the two neighbouring nations, which have fought three wars since independence in 1947, could quickly assemble nuclear arms.

The India Today survey, commissioned by private polling firm Marg, showed 62 per cent of the respondents would approve if India exploded an atom

bomb to develop its nuclear weapons capability. Thirty-five per cent would disapprove.

The survey of 2,000 adults in nine major cities was carried out on Dec. 5 and 7, before the New York Times story.

Among those who would approve of a test, 54 per cent said they would favour developing nuclear weapons even if it meant that countries such as the United States and Japan would impose sanctions which could affect India's economic growth.

The main reason cited for retaining India's nuclear capability was to protect against nuclear threats from Pakistan and China.

"We do not subscribe to a world in which racial apartheid is replaced by nuclear apartheid," said Jaswant Singh, a leader of the rightwing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The U.S. newspaper report was sure to thrust the nuclear issue to the forefront of the national political debate as general elections are due by mid-1996 approach, diplomats said.

The main challenger to Mr. Rao's Congress Party, the BJP has staked out a hardline defence stance calling for production of a nuclear weapons system.

The India Today poll appeared to show support for the BJP's position. Forty-three per cent of the respondents said they would be more inclined to support a political party if it promised to ensure that India would have nuclear weapons.

Twenty-six per cent said they would be less inclined, and 31 per cent said the party's stance would make no difference.

Opposition parties from the BJP to the Communists lashed out at the New York Times report, claiming it reflected the views of U.S. officials who want India to

sign a global test ban treaty.

At one time a strong supporter of the comprehensive test ban treaty currently under consideration, New Delhi has backtracked and now says it is reviewing its options.

India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty this year, saying it was discriminatory because it did not require the five acknowledged nuclear powers — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — to dismantle their arsenals.

"If the (New York Times) story was planted with a view to pressuring India, then I find it laughable," the BJP's Singh said. "Vital national interests are vital national interests and cannot be determined by some other country."

Meanwhile Pakistani commentators said Sunday Pakistan might be forced across the nuclear threshold if India goes ahead with reported plans for a nuclear test.

"Should India have its second nuclear test, we will demand that Pakistan examine its options in light of the heightened threat to our national security," Mushahid Hussain, spokesman for the opposition Pakistan Muslim League Party, told Reuters.

"This is a test case for the West, particularly the United States, since they talk so much on nuclear non-proliferation," he said.

"As Pakistanis and Muslims, we feel their concern is selective. Pakistan is targeted, while known nuclear powers like Israel and India are exempted from American pressure."

Pakistan's official response to the New York Times report that India could be preparing for its second nuclear test has been muted.

A Pakistani foreign office spokesman said Saturday that such a test would set back non-proliferation

efforts in South Asia and "jeopardise peace and stability in the region".

He said it would also have grave implications for efforts to achieve a comprehensive test ban treaty.

A commentary in the English-language daily The News said an Indian nuclear test would create a security peril for Pakistan that it could meet only by carrying out a similar test.

"It will force Pakistan to leave the long-held line of being a screw's turn away from being a declared nuclear power."

"The force of rational argument against going nuclear will automatically be weakened by the severe pressure the hawks... will generate," wrote columnist Syed Talat Hussain.

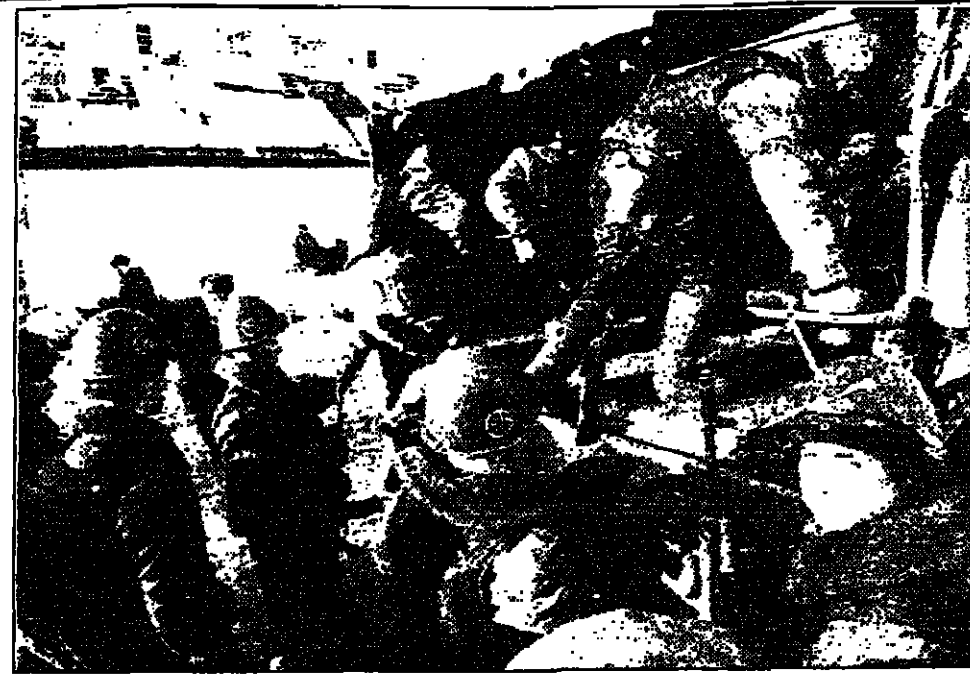
The Karachi-based Dawn newspaper urged the United States, which imposed sanctions on Pakistan in 1990 due to suspicions about its nuclear programme, to put similar pressure on India.

"Washington should now be using its considerable clout with New Delhi — more specifically its generous plans for investment in the Indian market — to dissuade India from carrying out the planned nuclear test," a Dawn editorial said.

The Nation newspaper said India's alleged intention to carry out a nuclear test would infuriate the seven-nation association of Southeast Asian nations, which last week signed a treaty banning nuclear arms from Southeast Asia.

"The fact that the Indian bomb could have a snowball effect would exacerbate political tensions in the whole of South Asia and virtually rule out whatever chances there are for a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council for India," it said.

Pakistan has called for a nuclear-free zone in South Asia, but says it will not sign the NPT unless India does.



RUSSIAN TROOPS ON PATROL: Russian soldiers get into a truck on their way to patrol the streets of the Chechen capital, Grozny, as part of the security measures taken by the Russian government to assure a safe electoral process for Chechen local authorities and Russian State Duma representatives (AFP photo)

Russians under siege in Chechen city

MOSCOW (R) — Rebels battled besieged Russian forces in the second city of the breakaway province of Chechnya Sunday in a fourth day of fighting, Interfax News Agency said.

Russian servicemen stranded in the buildings of a military headquarters and a railway station in the city of Gudermes were surrounded by the rebels and under fire, Interfax said, quoting the Russian military command in Chechnya.

Interfax said Russian forces suffered no casualties in Gudermes in the last 24 hours, but elsewhere in Chechnya three Russian soldiers had been killed and two wounded in 28 rebel

attacks on Russian positions, 20 of them in the capital Grozny.

There was no independent confirmation of the latest reports.

The rebels, who seek independence and oppose Russia's efforts to stage national and local elections in Chechnya, infiltrated Gudermes Thursday. The city is sealed off by the Russian troops and reporters are barred from approaching it.

In the rest of Russia, people were voting for a new State Duma, or lower house of parliament, amid tight security because officials fear rebel guerrilla attacks.

Although the Chechnya fighting did not figure

prominently in the Russian election campaign, it has not helped President Boris Yeltsin's image — nor that of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his Our Home Is Russia bloc.

Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov has said 32 Russian soldiers were killed and 41 wounded Thursday in Gudermes.

Interfax News Agency, quoting refugees from Gudermes and soldiers evacuated from there, said the bodies of those killed were lying in the streets.

One soldier said the fighting resembled the intense battle for Grozny in January. There was no independent confirmation of any of the figures.

Japan coalition may form a new party

TOKYO (R) — The three parties in Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's ruling coalition may merge into a single new political entity that could dominate Japanese politics, a veteran politician said Sunday.

"It is possible that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Socialist Party and the Sakigake Party would become one party under a name such as the Liberal Socialist Party," Shizuka Kamei, former LDP transport minister said in a television current affairs programme.

The long-ruling LDP is the dominant force in the three-party ruling coalition formed in June 1994 with Mr. Murayama's Socialist Party and Sakigake, a small group led by Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura.

"There are no longer major differences between the three parties now," Mr. Kamei said.

Mr. Kamei said the merger could take place sometime around the next general elections. Polls are not due until mid-1997 but observers and many lawmakers expect Mr. Murayama to call elections after next year's budget is passed, possibly by the end of March.

Mr. Kamei made the remarks at a time when the main opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) faces a split because of a leadership battle. A party presidential election on Dec. 27 will decide the contest between former Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata and back-room powerbroker Ichiro Ozawa.

The divide in the one-year-old party, which analysts say could develop into a fatal split, grew more visible Sunday with the two candidates stepping up their leadership campaigns.

Mr. Kamei said the Hata-Ozawa leadership battle could drive some Shinshinto members into the arms of the LDP.

"I heard that there are a considerable number of people (within Shinshinto) who don't side with Ozawa," Mr. Kamei said. "Those people could join hands with us."

The 53-year-old Ozawa, known for a high-handed style in his role as a behind-the-scenes political fixer, played a key part in bringing together the nine opposition parties which formed Shinshinto.

South Korea on higher alert after North moves planes

SEOUL, (R) — The South Korean Air Force is on a higher state of alert after the Communist north deployed more war planes near the demilitarised zone separating the two Koreas, the domestic Yonhap news agency said Sunday.

Yonhap, quoting the joint chiefs of staff, said Pyongyang had recently deployed about 20 more planes in three forward bases, bringing the total to 115 in areas close to the demilitarised zone that has divided the Korean Peninsula since the 1950-53 Korean war.

Government officials were not available for comment.

"The South Korean air force has decided to step up various air vigilance operations," Yonhap quoted a joint chiefs of staff officer as saying.

He said the decision was reached after a major commanders meeting Saturday.

Tension between the two Koreas, still technically at war, has reached a new peak in recent weeks with both sides stepping up surveillance.

South Korea's intelligence chief also warned Friday of a threat from the north, saying the greatest danger was Pyongyang's "internal crisis and military adventurism."

A parliamentary official quoted Kwon Young-Hae as telling the parliamentary

intelligence committee: "This winter and next spring will be a critical period in managing the crisis on the Korean Peninsula."

Kwon said North Korea had amassed more than 90 planes at three bases, each within 40 km of the demilitarised zone. In addition, a flight of bombers had been advanced to within five minutes flying time of Seoul.

In the past several months there have been two incursions by agents from the north that have created full-scale security alerts in the south.

South Korea has also become increasingly edgy over reports of a looming famine in the north.

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Dole outstrips rivals in presidential fund-raising

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Senate majority leader Bob Dole has raised more than \$24 million for his 1996 presidential bid and aims to have at least two-and-a-half times as much money as his nearest rival.

Sen. Dole's campaign manager Scott Reed told Reuters in an interview late Friday he hoped to reach \$25 million by the end of the year.

Subtracting the money Sen. Dole has already spent on his campaign, he would have \$5 million to \$6 million on hand and get \$9.4 million more in federal matching funds early next year.

"We will have at least two-and-a-half times more than our nearest competi-

tor," Mr. Reed said.

Sen. Dole leads his eight Republican rivals by a wide margin in public opinion polls with the first party preference tests of the presidential campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire only two months away.

The latest polls show Sen. Dole with the support of around 45 per cent of Republican voters with his nearest rival at around 10-12 per cent.

History shows that the leader in the polls and fundraising on the eve of the first party preference votes almost invariably goes on to win his party's presidential nomination.

Texas Senator Phil Gramm had been expected to match Sen. Dole in

fundraising. But the flow of donations to his campaign has slowed and he recently sent supporters a letter asking for "emergency donations" to cover a shortfall.

Sen. Gramm is expected to receive around \$6.5 million in matching funds but is already borrowing against that money to finance an advertising campaign in key states.

Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander is also short of money and has been forced to borrow against the matching funds he expects next month. The federal government matches all campaign donations dollar for dollar up to \$250 million.

Of the remaining candidates, only publishing mil-

lionaire Steve Forbes can match Sen. Dole. Mr. Forbes is financing his long-shot campaign out of his own pocket and says he is willing to spend \$25 million to advance his presidential ambitions.

He has already spent \$7 million, much of it on TV advertising attacking Sen. Dole and Sen. Gramm. He has spent more in Iowa, which stages the first big vote of the campaign next Feb. 12, than did all 13 Republican candidates combined in the 1988 campaign.

Mr. Forbes' latest commercial attacks Sen. Dole for voting in the Senate to spend money to build a subway under the Capitol building.

Mr. Roh's classmate and former President Chun Doo Hwan is also under detention at Anyang Prison. Mr. Chun, now on hunger strike, was arrested and detained on Dec. 3 on charges of military rebellion.

Mr. Chun staged a coup in December 1979 which led to an army massacre that crushed civilian resistance in Kwangju in May 1980. Official figures show nearly 200 people were killed.

Yonhap quoted Mr. Chun's son after his visit Saturday as saying his father, who faces indictment on Dec. 22, was getting very weak but still refused to eat solid food.

The ex-general, detained on charges of military rebellion stemming from the putsch, has refused solid food since his arrest on Dec. 3 and drinks only barley tea and water.

Since his arrest, prosecutors have questioned dozens of ex-military leaders and defence ministers.

Mexico police probe witches in Colosio case

MEXICO CITY (R) — Investigators have interviewed two Spanish witches in the attempt to link the brother of Mexico's former president to the 1994 killing of a presidential candidate, a Mexican daily reported Saturday.

El Financiero newspaper said two members of the police team investigating the slaying of Luis Donaldo Colosio had travelled to the Canary Islands to talk to the witches.

It did not say when the trip took place but said the Spanish press heard of their supposedly clandestine trip and dogged the investigators with questions.

El Financiero said the investigators received infor-

mation that Raul Salinas consulted the witches in relation to the Colosio slaying, either before or after the March 23, 1994, killing.

"This is linked to the Colosio crime," El Financiero quoted investigator German Rangel as telling Spanish reporters in the Canaries.

Officials at the attorney general's office were not available for comment.

El Financiero said one version of the information had Raul Salinas attempting to contact the spirit of Colosio to ask forgiveness for the killing.

The newspaper, which said it had confirmed its report with officials in Mexico, also said that Raul

Salinas had told unnamed witnesses that he was involved in the Colosio slaying.

It also said that before his death Colosio, former President Carlos Salinas's hand-picked presidential candidate for the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), had become aware of alleged links between Raul Salinas and drug-trafficking.

There was no immediate reaction from Raul's lawyers.

Raul Salinas is currently in prison awaiting trial for a different murder — that of PRI Secretary General Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu in September 1994.

Linda McCartney has breast tumour removed

LONDON (AFP) — Linda McCartney has successfully undergone an operation to have a "small lump" removed from her breast, her husband Paul McCartney, a former member of the Beatles, said in a statement Sunday. The statement, released by McCartney's agent Geoff Baker, said: "Linda had a scan at the Princess Grace Hospital in London last week and was found to have a small lump in her breast." "She has had an operation to remove the lump which was performed successfully. Luckily it was caught in time." The operation on the 53-year-old, who like her husband is a strong supporter of vegetarianism and healthy living, was carried out at London's Princess Grace Hospital, the statement said. It said Linda McCartney had since left the hospital for home, where she was resting. "Breast cancer awareness is something we have been keen to promote, and we would urge anyone with any worries about this to check it out with an early examination with their doctor," the statement said.

Trousers worn by Jim Morrison bring \$43,700

New York (R) — The pair of leather pants that singer Jim Morrison wore on the cover of the Doors album Absolutely Live sold for \$43,700 at Sotheby's auction house Saturday. Morrison, leader of the Doors, died of a drug overdose in 1971 at the age of 27. He wore the trousers in 1968. The brown leather pants with a zipper and two buckle straps, which were estimated to bring a price of \$20,000 to \$25,000, were bought by the Hard Rock Cafe. Many items did not attract high enough bids to be sold at Saturday's auction of Hollywood and rock 'n' roll memorabilia. Beate Paul McCartney's handwritten outline for the order of instruments and vocals on the song Hey Jude did not sell when bids reached only \$34,000. It had been estimated at between \$40,000 and \$45,000, the highest priced item in the auction. But Maryland collector Richard Marks was happy with his purchase: John Lennon's knife cleaner and a letter from Yoko Ono describing how often Lennon used it. He paid \$1,840. "It's curious," he said, noting the catalogue description of the antique "doesn't do it justice." An acoustic guitar owned and signed by Elvis Presley did not sell when bids reached only \$43,000. But a giant 30-inch (76 cm) Pepsi bottle cap that Presley also owned and signed — not only with his own name but with the word "bellywash," his nickname for the drink — sold for \$6,037.50.

Pavarotti sings the blues with Belgium's taxman

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The Belgium taxman caught up with Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti Saturday and slapped him with a one million Belgian Franc (\$33,000) bill for two concerts he did five years ago. Prosecutors in Antwerp confirmed that they had opened an investigation into the 60-year-old opera superstar, who was giving a performance in the city Saturday. The singer's entourage said Pavarotti was not personally responsible, and told the tax authorities to contact the Rudas Theatrical Organisation, which has represented his interests for the past 15 years. It is based in Las Vegas, in the U.S. state of Nevada.



Masked pro-democracy demonstrators march through Hong Kong streets as hundreds protest against Chinese government's jailing of dissident Wei Jingsheng (Reuters photo)

3 die, 2,500 flee poison gas near Cape Town

SOMERSET WEST, South Africa (R) — Poisonous gas spewing from a blazing chemical plant killed three people and forced at least 2,500 to flee from a small town 40 kilometres from Cape Town, South African authorities said Sunday.

"At this stage three people have died," police Captain Wicus Holtzhausen in the town of Somerset West told Reuters.

Other officials said the dead, and about 100 people being treated at local hospitals, had been overcome by clouds of poisonous sulphur dioxide gas belching from blazing piles of chemicals at the plant close to the satellite town of Macassar.

"We don't expect any more serious injuries or deaths. Maybe just cases of slight irritation," said incident Commander Heinrich Munnik.

The fire is now under control and police are patrolling residential areas to make sure the residents are fine," he said.

Capt. Holtzhausen said the plant caught fire late Saturday after a blaze in a field spread to piles of sulphur.

Macassar, from which authorities said about 2,500 people had been evacuated, was cloaked in a thick, grey cloud of smoke from the blaze which officials said was "the size of two football fields".

Residents said they initially thought the smoke was caused by burning grass.

"We just saw a bundle of smoke coming over our place...We first thought it was just grass burning but then we smelt gas. Our eyes and noses were stinging and our chests (were) so tight. We had difficulty breathing," Macassar resident David Ross told Reuters at a community hall being used by evacuees.

"But then everybody (the rescuers) were fantastic. They took us out in buses, taxis, fire engines and police vans...I've never experienced such human togetherness," Mr. Ross said.

Fire officials said some fumes had spread towards Cape Town but the level of gas was not high enough to cause concern.

"It's still a long, hard haul. It's a very big job to control

such a large area of burning sulphur," said chief fire officer Pete Harries.

Television pictures taken early Sunday showed people being treated in emergency vehicles for smoke and gas inhalation.

Children with tears streaming down their faces were carried to ambulances by parents with handkerchiefs clutched to their faces.

About 500 fire fighters and other rescuers were involved in the operation to control the blaze and air force helicopters were water-bombing what flames remained.

David Luman, the manager of Woolworths Supermarket in the Somerset West Mall, which is being used as an emergency centre, told Reuters most of the people evacuated had been moved from the mall, where they had spent the night.

"We gave them what food we could because they had nothing at all," he said. The local council and regional government said they would look after the evacuees until it was safe enough for them to return home.

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Taiwan to get 1st delivery of F-16s in July

TAIPEI (R) — Lockheed Martin plans to begin delivery of F-16 warplanes to Taiwan next July as part of a total of 150 jets ordered by the island, the United Daily News reported Sunday.

The delivery of the jet fighters will help Taiwan keep pace with the rapid arms build-up in China, Taiwan's giant neighbour and rival since 1949, the Defence Ministry has said.

The U.S. company told a Taiwanese scientific mission to Dallas Friday that it would complete the first F-16 for Taiwan in May 1996 and deliver the fighter next July if the test run goes smoothly, the paper said.

An unnamed Lockheed Martin spokesman told the mission the company plans to transfer the manufacturing technology of nine key parts of the jets to Taiwan after the firm completes the first 22 fighters for Taipei, the paper said.

Taiwan agreed in 1992 to buy the 150 F-16s for about \$6 billion. Also in 1992, France authorised the sale of 60 Mirage 2000 fighters to Taipei.

The Defence Ministry has said it will start taking delivery of the F-16s and Mirages in 1996 and full delivery would take a few years.

The ministry expected the first batch of F-16s, about

60, to enter service between 1996 and 1997.

Taiwan is also developing its Indigenous Defence Fighters (IDF), the first of which entered service in late 1994. All 130 IDF fighters are scheduled to be in service by the end of 1998.

China, which has claimed sovereignty over Taiwan since the end of the Chinese Civil War 46 years ago, has refused to rule out using military force to recover the island.

Beijing has pressured foreign powers against selling advanced military equipment to Taipei and protested when the F-16 and Mirage deals were made.

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Tanzania-Burundi border to remain closed

DAR ES SALAAM (AFP) — Tanzania's border with Burundi will remain closed until peace, security, stability and solidarity have been restored in Burundi, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa announced Sunday.

Speaking to reporters after separate talks with the leaders of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, Mr. Mkapa also warned Burundi not to pursue rebels into Tanzanian territory.

"It is our sincere hope that efforts to restore peace, stability and solidarity will be pursued further to provide a conducive atmosphere for the return of Burundian refugees now in Tanzania," Mr. Mkapa told journalists at a press conference.

He pledged not to allow any group to use Tanzania either for military training or as a launch pad for attacks against the govern-

ment or people of Burundi. Mr. Mkapa held separate meetings with Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu Thursday and Burundian President Sylvestre Ntibunganya Friday before flying to Entebbe in Uganda Saturday to meet President Yoweri Museveni.

He said the talks with the Burundian and Rwandan heads of state centred mainly on the problem of repatriating refugees from ethnic strife in those countries.

Both Mr. Bizimungu and Mr. Ntibunganya agreed on the necessity of immediate repatriation of their nationals living as refugees in Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, he added.

He said it was also stressed during the talks that restoration of peace, stability and security were a precondition for the return of the refugees.

On Rwanda, Mr. Mkapa said he was pleased the government had agreed an extension of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda peace force for another three months.

"This will help build confidence among prospective returnees," he added.

Mr. Mkapa stressed that anyone involved in last year's genocide in Rwanda must be sought and tried, and restated his support for an international U.N. tribunal on Rwanda that has begun work in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

Also on the agenda for his talks with Mr. Museveni was the possible revival of an east African economic community which collapsed in 1977 due to differences between Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Haitians to vote in major test of U.S. policy

PORT-AU-PRINCE, (R)

Haitians began voting Sunday morning in a presidential election regarded as the key test of the U.S.-led military effort to restore democracy to this poverty-ravaged Caribbean nation.

Polls opened at 6 a.m. (1100 GMT) in the first round of balloting to choose a successor to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a wildly popular former Roman Catholic priest who won Haiti's first free and fair presidential balloting in 1990.

Mr. Aristide was forced from office by a military coup in September 1991 and restored under an international military occupation in October 1994.

Constitutionally barred from seeking a second consecutive term, Mr. Aristide is expected to be succeeded by former Prime Minister Rene Preval, the candidate of Mr. Aristide's Lavalas political movement.

Mr. Aristide endorsed both Mr. Preval and the electoral process Friday, after a long delay in which he was seen as reluctant to disappoint supporters who wanted his term extended for three years in compensation for the time spent in exile.

Mr. Preval's commanding 64.5 per cent support in a poll last week of capital residents, if maintained nationwide in Sunday's election, would ensure him of a landslide victory over the field of 13 other candidates and avoid a January runoff ballot.

Mr. Preval is running on a platform of judicial reform and government decentralisation, although the lackluster campaign has been virtually devoid of issues.

Election officials said 3.6 million Haitians — about 97 per cent of the electorate — have registered to vote. The opinion poll, published Saturday in Le Nouvelliste newspaper, indicated 76 per cent of those registered planned to vote.

Mr. Aristide, who has repeatedly sounded themes of reconciliation and national unity since his return, repeated those themes last week in a meeting with reporters.

"This electoral process is clearly one more opportunity to see how we care about that unity," Mr. Aristide said.

U.S. officials have in the run-up to the election stressed their belief that a peaceful, free and fair election that leads to an orderly transition of power would cement the transition to democracy.

Hong Kong faces new uncertainty after China dissident's sentencing

HONG KONG (AFP) — The sentencing of leading Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng to 14 years in jail has cast a pall over Hong Kong's six million people and prospects for their way of life after the territory reverts to China in 1997.

Mr. Wei's conviction and sentencing Wednesday for conspiring to subvert the Beijing government led to a series of protests in Hong Kong outside the Xinhua News Agency, which is the de facto mainland Chinese representative here.

Protests were led by the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of the Democratic and Patriotic Movement in China.

Although the daily rallies outside Xinhua were mostly peaceful, with occasional scuffles between protesters and police, concerns over Mr. Wei's trial are deep-rooted, observers said.

The anxiety stems from the assumption that people like Wei might not be allowed to express their views under the post-1997 Hong Kong government.

"We are worried that Hong Kong could face similar political suppression in the future," said district board member Chui Pak-Tai, who was among protesters demonstrating outside Xinhua.

"How can we remain silent?" asked legislator and alliance chairman Szeto Wah. "The trial has shown that the Chinese Communist Party is shameless, absolutely lawless and inhumane."

"Today is Wei Jingsheng, tomorrow will be Hong Kong's people," said Mr. Szeto, whose organisation has been deemed subversive by Beijing for its support for pro-democracy protests in China in 1989.

Legislator Martin Lee, chairman of the Democratic Party, which holds a majority in the territory's Legislative Council, said: "It is important that all Hong Kong people stand up to make sure our rule of law is maintained."

"If not, this kind of thing will happen in Hong Kong," he warned.

"If, as it now appears, Chinese leaders do not understand how freedom, human rights and the rule of law have laid the foundation of Hong Kong's success, Beijing may scrub them out and destroy forever the value of Hong Kong, now and in the future."

Governor Chris Patten also warned that Mr. Wei's harsh sentencing has deepened concern in Hong Kong on human rights after 1997, saying: "Hong Kong would not be so successful if it was not so free."

"Those who have understandable cause to be most clearly concerned are the people of Hong Kong because 1997 is an event in our calendar, not in anyone else's," said Mr. Patten, who has irked Beijing with his democratic reforms.

His remarks drew immediate response from Xinhua Deputy Director Zhang Junsheng, who lambasted the governor for meddling in China's internal affairs.

Mr. Zhang however said Mr. Wei's sentence would not affect confidence in

Hong Kong, which would enjoy its capitalistic lifestyle for 50 years after 1997 under Beijing's "one country, two systems" policy in dealing with the territory.

"Some criminal has been dealt with according to law, why should it have an impact here?" Mr. Zhang said.

Concern over changes in the way of life here have been growing since a Sino-British row broke out over human rights in Hong Kong after 1997.

In October, the Beijing-appointed Preliminary Working Committee proposed watering down Hong Kong's bill of rights after the change of sovereignty.

China contends that the document, as drafted by the British administration, stands above other laws and undermines the supremacy of the basic law, its mini-constitution for the post-1997 Hong Kong special administrative region.

White House seeks Whitewater compromise

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Saturday searched for a compromise on releasing subpoenaed documents to the Senate Whitewater Committee in the hope of avoiding a threatened constitutional showdown.

After refusing to comply with a subpoena for notes from a 1993 meeting on Whitewater, the White House said it was willing to release them if all parties, including independent special counsel Kenneth Starr, agreed it would not set a precedent for other documents.

But hopes for a quick resolution faded late Saturday when a spokesman for committee chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato contradicted earlier reports from

the White House that a compromise appeared to have been reached.

"The White House is free to go to Starr, but the committee will press ahead with its subpoena anyway," the spokesman said.

The White House has refused to comply with the panel's subpoena on the grounds it would violate the president's right to a confidential relationship with his attorneys.

Senate investigators are looking into the possibility that funds from a failed savings and loan firm may have been diverted improperly to Mr. Clinton's 1984 gubernatorial campaign and to Whitewater Development Corp., an Arkansas real estate venture partly owned by the Clintons.

Asked during a CNN interview Saturday about the approach to Mr. Starr, Sen. D'Amato replied: "As far as I'm concerned we have no difficulty expressing that or urging that position."

He said the committee had no problem with assuring Mr. Starr that turning over the documents would neither set a precedent nor waive the client-lawyer relationship.

But the New York Republican added that the committee, whose mandate to investigate Whitewater expires on Feb. 29, was not prepared to wait for Mr. Starr's decision.

"What this is doing is running the clock," he said.

The White House dropped some of the earlier condi-

tions it had insisted must be met before it would comply with the Senate subpoena.

"We are eager to turn over the notes to the public. We would like nothing better," special associate counsel to the president Mark Fabiani said in a telephone interview.

He said that "no one is being asked to give up anything... We just don't want to see it used as a club against us in the future."

"We're pursuing all available options to turn over the notes," Mr. Fabiani said, stressing that the White House was trying to "protect the president's right to seek confidential advice from his lawyers."



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Accountability stems corruption

NO SOCIETY is different from another when it comes to the presence of individuals or groups that seek influence and wealth through crooked means. But societies are different in their abilities to curb this phenomenon which has come to be called corruption. The effectiveness of any national effort to fight the harmful phenomenon corresponds, to a great extent, to the sophistication, development and transparency of its public institutions. In other words, democratic societies are generally more efficient in ensuring abidance by the law.

Corruption is a plague from which democratic and undemocratic societies suffer. The difference is that in undemocratic societies, embezzlement, graft and nepotism flourish at a faster pace because of the lack of mechanisms that allow for investigating the way people, including government officials, conduct their business.

In democracies the transparency and accountability under which public officials have to operate necessarily imply a greater degree of control over corrupt practices. And it is in this light that the debate about corruption in Jordan should proceed. Corruption will exist as long as man does. The ability to control it, however, will grow as fast as the process of institutionalising democracy. Corruption can be minimised through the enforcement of legislation that will end individuals' ability to make decisions without having to explain them to any other person; that will allow for investigating of officials' wealth and will articulate more clearly the mechanisms through which government agencies should do their job, in terms of awarding contracts, licences, etc. But the impact of these measures will remain minimal until our democratic institutions have matured. The systems of checks and balances on the work of the government and the way it conducts business in more advanced societies come not just from the law. They derive from the workings of their own civic societies and from officials who are encouraged to expose corruption under the protection of the law.

The media plays no small role in the fight against corruption. That, however, requires empowering the media with access to public documents and information that deal with issues of public interest. This is why it is absurd that the current debate about the role of the press in the country did in no way point to the importance of giving the press more access to public information.

One of the truly effective ways to ensure the success of the fight against corruption is to force a higher degree of transparency and accountability vis-a-vis public officials. The job can be facilitated by strengthening democracy and its institutions.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

TAREQ MASARWEH, a writer in Al Ra'i, Sunday criticised the Israeli authorities for barring hundreds of Jordanians from entering the West Bank to take part in Nablus celebrations of liberation. Neither the Jordanians nor the Palestinians should accept this offence lest it becomes the norm in Israel's treatment of visitors to the West Bank in the future, said the writer. The Israelis who prevented the Jordanians from going to Nablus wanted to punish Nablus youth who threw stones on the withdrawing Israeli forces and wanted to prove that Israel still holds the upper hand in dealings between the Palestinians and the other Arabs, said the writer. He said that perhaps the Israelis wanted to send a message to the Jordanians that they should accept a confederation with the Palestinians if they wish to visit their brethren in the West Bank and wanted to deny the Palestinians the joy of meeting with their Jordanian brothers before such confederation has emerged. The writer said that Israel's actions against the Jordanians also served as a signal to Jordan that the withdrawal of Israeli forces should not be interpreted as a victory for the Palestinians or the start of the total liberation of the occupied lands in Palestine.

IF SYRIA wants to go along the path of peace with Israel, it will now face the prospect of halting all Lebanese resistance activity from South Lebanon against Israel and will have to chart a new strategy for its relations with Iran, said Saleh Qallab, a writer in Al Dastour. Before giving signals that it is ready for peace with Israel, Syria used to employ the Lebanese resistance groups as a tool to make it clear to Israel and the United States that Israel cannot enjoy peace as long as the Golan remains under occupation. But now, as the Golan is being returned, no resistance activity will be expected, said the writer. By making peace with Israel, Damascus will have to convince Tehran that Iranian backed militia in Southern Lebanon should halt their activities and has to persuade the Iranians to accept the expected peace treaty, continued the writer.

Human Right File

By Dr. Waleed M. Sa'di

'Weapons for wars, tools for peace'

THERE WAS a meeting for the mass media on the sidelines of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent that was held in Geneva on Dec. 2. The meeting drew participants from major newspapers and television networks from the four corners of the globe. The motto of the meeting, which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had organised to update reporting on humanitarian law and humanitarian aid, was aptly entitled "Weapons for Wars, Tools for Peace" in a bid to cover most of the implications of armed conflicts, be they local or international.

What received most attention at the start of the two-day symposium was the proliferation of aid agencies, many of them actually competing against one another for recognition and funding. There is so much overlapping in the functions and mandates of national, regional and international organisations offering aid and support to victims of natural and man-made disasters that donor countries have become confused as to which ones they should pick and choose to carry out humanitarian tasks. Some journalists even suggested that there are also many bogus groups competing for funding from countries and charitable organisations, whose legitimacy and accountability remain to be tested. As a matter of fact, the world is now full of institutions and organisations claiming to speak on behalf of victims to the extent that the picture has indeed become confusing.

I suggested the formation of an association or a club which would screen aid agencies and give credentials to only those which are bona fide ones in a bid to help donor countries select the ones that are really deserving of their contributions. Although the idea was not picked up by any of the journalists attending the meeting, it still remains a functional approach to a real problem.

On a more substantive ground, accountability could be the key to drawing a line in the quagmire of unchecked growth in the number of aid agencies. In this vein, I suggested that donor countries have become more sophisti-

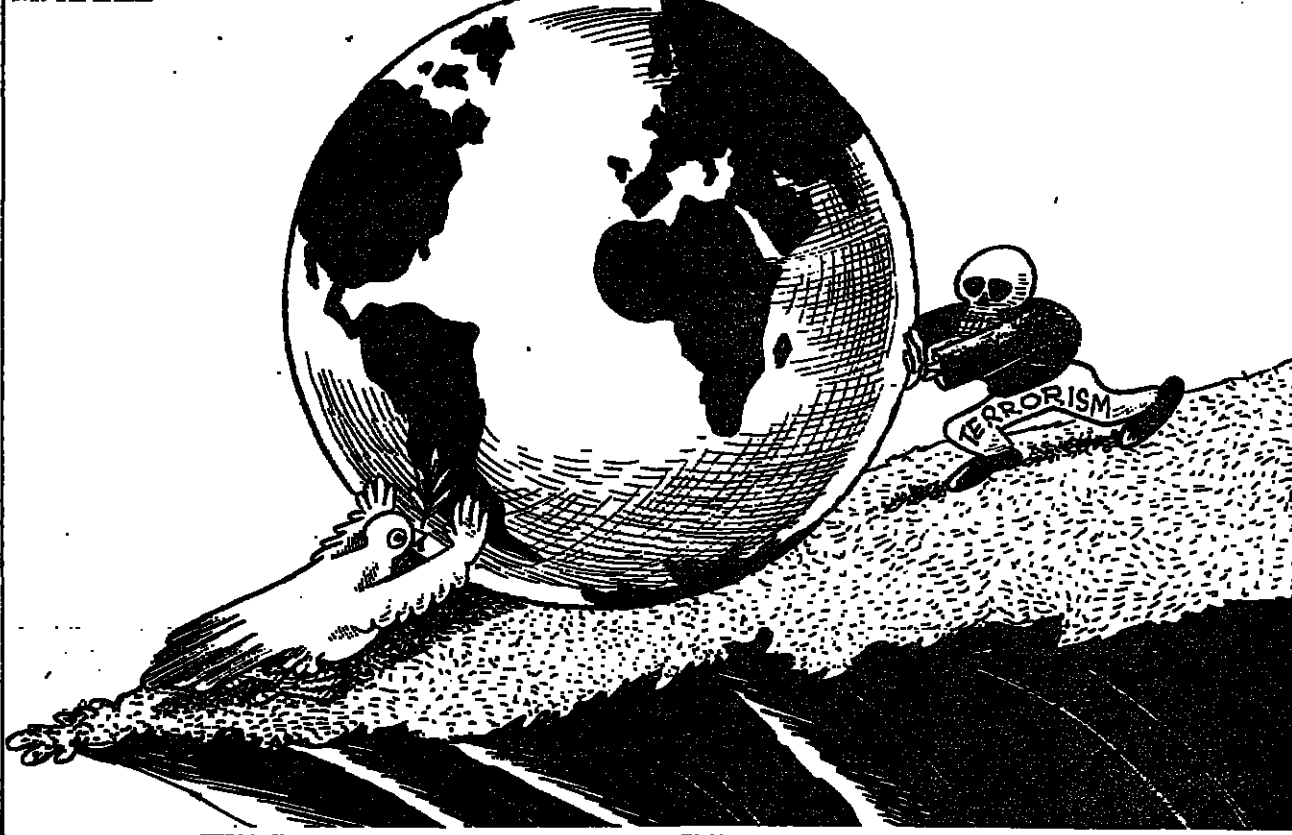
cated in their selection mechanism by scrutinising budgets of potential recipients of their donations, with a view of determining the ratio between their administrative expenses and the amount of money that victims actually receive. Admittedly there is a number of international aid agencies where the lion share of their budgets goes for big fat salaries of high executives that leaves very little for field expenditures.

In this vein it would be interesting to discern the number of executives who would continue to serve international aid agencies if their salaries were slashed right to half what they are. This could be an easy way to determine who is genuinely driven by humanitarian considerations and who is there on the top floors of such international agencies only for the money.

Suppose for a moment all U.N. agencies, which carry out humanitarian functions, recruit people who are dedicated enough to serve for only small remunerations. This would be a sure way of sifting the genuinely motivated personnel from the ones who cannot care less at the end of the day. Surely all people involved in humanitarian functions must also be able to support themselves and their families. Yet in order to separate the highly motivated people from the noncommittal ones, we need to reduce the monetary incentives to such a level where only the highly motivated people remain at the helm of international agencies.

The ICRC actually offers a fine example on both fronts, which all U.N. agencies may wish to follow. To begin with the ratio of administrative expenditures to expenses spent on victims is low in comparison with the budgetary allocations of major international agencies to such items. Secondly the incomes of the people who man the ICRC are also low in comparison with their counterparts in U.N. institutions. No wonder the ICRC enjoys the best reputation in humanitarian endeavours and is constantly held in high esteem by all countries. This is not to mention the impartiality, neutrality and independence of the organisation which make it stand out among all aid agencies operating in the field.

M. KAHIL



Europeans and Americans plan to be doing a lot more together

By Peter Tarnoff
and
Joan E. Spero

WASHINGTON — The trans-Atlantic partnership has passed its greatest post-cold war test by ending the Bosnian war. That success presents us with a new and perhaps even tougher challenge — securing the Bosnian peace. It is a challenge which the United States and Europe can only meet together.

Together we have transformed adversaries into allies and dictators into democrats. We have built institutions that ensured our security and economic strength. We stood together and won the cold war. The road from war to peace in Bosnia is the most dramatic evidence that the trans-Atlantic partnership remains essential, and the most visible evidence that America remains committed to Europe's security.

It is most important to remember that the impetus to renew and redefine the relationship between the United States and Europe arose from its success. The end of the cold war reflected the triumph of trans-Atlantic ideals. Today Bosnia, until recently a tragic example of post-cold war disintegration, is a potential crucible for deeper pan-European and trans-Atlantic cooperation.

Bosnia underscores a simple fact: Without a strong trans-Atlantic partnership, the prospect of a safer, richer, freer world will fade. A peaceful, prosperous and undivided Europe is within our grasp because of the singular success of our trans-Atlantic partnership.

We must now reshape

'The new trans-Atlantic agenda is a comprehensive road map for joint action and cooperation. The Madrid summit was only a first step in the process; a new trans-Atlantic consensus can only emerge incrementally as we pursue common goals.'

our partnership to make it more responsive to current times. That is why, in June, Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed new initiatives to strengthen economic, political and human ties across the Atlantic. And that is why President Bill Clinton travelled to Madrid this month to launch, together with European Union leaders, a new trans-Atlantic agenda.

The agenda commits the United States and Europe to work together to implement the peace and help war-ravaged Bosnia to recover economically and politically. But it also looks beyond Bosnia, establishing a common agenda for the 21st century.

In 1990, as the cold war was ending, the United States and then European Community agreed on an extensive series of consultations. Now, with a new world to shape, the United States and the European Union are committed to move beyond consultations to joint action in four major areas:

■ Together we will promote peace, development and democracy around the world. In addition to our efforts in Bosnia, we will cooperate to consolidate democracy and market economies in Cen-

tral and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. To use scarce resources more efficiently, we will establish a high-level consultative group to coordinate our global development and humanitarian assistance efforts. We will cooperate to combat nuclear proliferation, most immediately by joint support for the Korean Energy Development Organisation.

■ Together we will meet new global challenges. Our top priority is to combat organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism through increased exchanges of information and expertise between European and U.S. law enforcement agencies and training of law enforcement officials in the new Central and East European democracies. We will coordinate our positions on major environmental issues, disseminate environmental technologies, and reduce public health risks from hazardous substances. And, we will develop a global early warning and response system for new and re-emerging communicable diseases such as AIDS and the Ebola virus.

■ Together we will build a trans-Atlantic marketplace by reducing or eliminating barriers to our bilateral trade and invest-

ment. Trans-Atlantic economic relations, already the world's largest and freest, can set a standard for liberalisation and regulatory harmonisation that invigorate the world economy. We will negotiate agreements on mutual recognition of product testing and certification and greater customs cooperation. Longer term, we seek to create a trans-Atlantic information society that allows our people to take full advantage of new information technology and services.

■ Together we will build new trans-Atlantic bridges between our citizens. The agenda is also about people. By furthering exchange among our business communities, legislators, educators and students and by using new channels of communication, such as the Internet, we aim to nurture in present and future generations the mutual understanding and shared purpose that have long characterised our relationship.

The new trans-Atlantic agenda is a comprehensive road map for joint action and cooperation. The Madrid summit was only a first step in the process; a new trans-Atlantic consensus can only emerge incrementally as we pursue common goals. By working together and with other Atlantic democracies on this ambitious agenda, we can forestall future Bosnias and strengthen the basis of our own security and prosperity.

The writers are, respectively, U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs and undersecretary for economic affairs. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Rivalry on Right boosts Turkey's Islamists

By Jonathan Lyons
Reuter

ISTANBUL — Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and her main opposition rival are poised to split Turkey's conservative vote, opening the way for a strong showing by the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (RP) in next Sunday's general poll.

Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland (ANAP) generally share a pro-business and pro-European outlook. They compete for many of the same voters.

They have even relied on the same pop star to sign their campaign songs. "Come on, Onward my Turkey" and "Shake it, Mesut".

Yet political analysts say personal animosity has clouded prospects for cooperation, dashing the hopes of big business and others for a grand conservative coalition to lead Turkey into an age of privatisation and global economic integration.

"DYP-ANAP cooperation would have cleared the way for all the pieces in the political jigsaw to fall into their proper place," columnist Hasan Cemal wrote at the weekend in the leading Sabah daily.

"The ambitions of Ciller and Yilmaz have closed that road. The vendetta they are taking part in has, above all, helped Welfare and no one else."

Public opinion polls ahead of the Dec. 24 polls, although heavily restricted by election laws, bear this out.

Four surveys leaked to a Turkish magazine suggest Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz will gather some 35 to 40 per cent of the vote between them — more than one-and-a-half times that of the Islamist RP.

The same surveys put the RP either in first place with a narrow plurality, or in second place just behind Mr. Yilmaz's ANAP, founded by the late president Turgut Ozal to modernise Turkey.

"The conservatives are squandering an excellent opportunity to set Turkey's course for the 21st century," said a Western diplomat with good ties to the leading parties. "A lot of the (conservative) MPs know this but can do nothing."

As if to highlight their differences, Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz have wasted much of the time in recent television debates rounding on each other in personal terms. At one point, Mr. Yilmaz pleaded with a moderator to make Ms. Ciller "shut up".

RP leader Necmettin Erbakan, by contrast, simply stayed away.

Mr. Erbakan is counting on impeccable grassroots organisation, disciplined cadres and the only vaguely coherent ideology in the race — an Islamic vision tinted with nostalgia — to capture a plurality of 550 parliamentary seats up for grabs.

He has denounced Turkey's new customs union with Europe, flogged by Ms. Ciller as her crowning achievement, as a "rag-and-bone" deal. Welfare also advocates withdrawal from NATO and creation of an Islamic common market.

Whether such views have any chance of becoming policy in overwhelmingly Muslim Turkey will depend on what are expected to be protracted coalition negotiations after next Sunday's polls.

So far, the leading secular parties have ruled out any deals with Mr. Erbakan and his Welfare Party.

Yet it is clear already that if Welfare is to build on its success of 1994, when it captured Istanbul, Ankara and other urban centres in municipal elections, it will largely come as a result of squandered opportunities and mis-rule by the right.

This includes widespread allegations of corruption, spreading poverty and runaway inflation, blamed by Mr. Erbakan in part on the International Monetary Fund and other Western institutions.

LETTERS

Med-Media programme to go on

To the Editor:

IN ITS Issue of Dec. 14, the Jordan Times published an article erroneously announcing the suspension and cancellation of the programme Med Media. The European Commission, represented by the EC Delegation in Amman, strongly denies this rumour and stresses that it is completely unfounded.

The European Commission has simply decided to reform the management mechanism of the Med Media programmes in order to expand the decentralised cooperation policy and to answer to its increasing demand.

Indeed, the Commission has decided to substantially revise the management method of the decentralised cooperation programmes — of which Med Media is a part — in order to better accommodate the following:

— The consensus reached by the 27 parties in the recent Barcelona Ministerial Conference (Nov. 27/28) on the cooperation of the civil society as an essential element of Euro-Mediterranean relations. This is a fundamental political resolution which gives increased dimension and recognition to this form of cooperation.

— The strong demand for this sort of cooperation, which is manifested by European and Mediterranean civil societies, and which calls for a more structured organisation compared to the previous pilot phase.

— The transparency requirement and need for rigorous procedures for the implementation of the decentralised cooperation programmes.

For these reasons, the Commission is concerned with ensuring effective and accurate follow up to the Barcelona conference, which has given precise directives to its services in order to take into account all the above considerations. In this framework, a renovated management mechanism of the decentralised cooperation programmes will be put into force.

Yves Gazon,
Head of delegation,
Delegation of The European Commission,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

هكذا عنه الأصل

Majority of Jordanians suffer from high prices

By Samir Hijawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The majority of Jordanian families are now complaining about the ever-increasing price of various commodities which, according to the Jordanian Consumer Protection Society (JCPS), rose by an average of 12 per cent over last year's figures.

A JCPS's recent survey has shown that non-subsidised foodstuffs and children wear rose by 22.7 per cent, stationery by 22.5 per cent, white meat by 11.6 per cent, red meat by 7.2 per cent and tissue paper by 17.5 per cent.

Bassam Agrabawi, a supermarket assistant and father of four, says prices rise constantly making it difficult for family breadwinners to make both ends meet. "My income remains at a standstill and I feel like going through an endless dark tunnel because my debts increase due

to the rise in prices which are making it hard for me even to meet the minimum requirements of my family," Mr. Agrabawi said.

"My family of six requires at least JD 240 a month in addition to rent but I do not earn this much, and I believe that only a few in this country can make both ends meet," he added.

Haj Khalil Samhuri, a street vendor who supports a 14-member family, says that most commodities required by his family are out of his reach due to the mad spiralling of prices. But, he adds, his children are earning and supporting his income with JD 100 a month.

"The problem with my job is that it is not constant and my income drops in winter. The sharp rise in prices of basic commodities this year created new problems for my family. To make matters even worse the Ministry of Supply has placed me within the high income category and

refused to issue me food coupons to enable me to buy subsidised foodstuffs," said Mousa Khalil, a tile mason. "We had hoped that the Amman economic summit would bring with it relief to the poor but it turned out that it was all a mirage because our living conditions are from bad to worst all the time," said Mr. Mousa. "We do not want aid but we rather need employment to earn us a decent living."

On the rise in prices, Mousa says: "The few things which the family used to buy have dropped by 50 per cent. For example, we eat poultry meat once every week or fortnight and we cook food every three days without meat of course. But we have been facing extra expenses in the purchase of stationery and books and clothing for the children and in the medical treatment of my father. We need a quick solution because too much pressure can result in explosion. There must be a

stop to the employment of non-Jordanian workers in the country so that Jordanians can live a decent life."

Umm Hassan, a housewife, says: "I buy used clothes for my children for the coming religious feast because I cannot buy new garments for them."

About her living conditions she says: "Our family of 12 live in a two-room house and we barely are able to pay rent and the electricity bill. To make things worse, the government has deprived us of the food coupons. My husband is not a minister earning JD 500 a month."

Abdullah Ahmad Abdullah, a seller of used clothes, says: "My eight-member family is living frugally as a result of the high prices. We stopped buying table eggs after the recent hike in egg prices and I buy one chicken every week for the whole family."

According to Mr. Abdullah, the problem lies with the

current stagnant market and little work and adds: "Four of my children are married and they are all unemployed. One of them supports a four-member family."

About the used clothes prices he says: "We now pay three times their cost because the price of a bale of used clothes has risen from JD 50 to JD 150 and scared away customers."

Mohammad Obeidat, the JCPS president, says: "A family with less than a JD 150 monthly can buy only 75 per cent of its basic needs while those earning up to JD 299 cannot buy 12 per cent of their needs and those earning up to JD 449 cannot buy 7.6 per cent of their real needs."

According to Ministry of Planning studies conducted in 1992, the rate of abject poverty stood at 14 per cent and that 30 per cent of the total population live under the poverty line, noted Dr. Obeidat.

He said that the price of 70

commodities has risen to unprecedented levels during 1995 reaching in some cases 52 per cent over the previous year.

The Ministry of Planning has estimated the average rise in prices in November alone at JD 13, a very big rise for the majority of the limited income groups.

Dr. Obeidat attributes the high rise in prices to "greediness" on the part of certain merchants who have a monopoly over foodstuffs citing as an example the price of coffee which has dropped by half on the international markets while the prices here remained unchanged.

He also attributed the rise in prices to the protection given by the government to certain commodities, a move that has served the greediness of certain merchants, and the government's failure to control prices and also the absence of a special law on the protection of the consumers.

India considers guiding foreign investment

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was quoted as saying his government was considering requiring foreign investors to set aside a share of their money for social spending.

Mr. Rao told a public meeting in the central town of Aagasad that under the proposal, foreign investors would have to earmark one per cent of the cost of their projects for facilities such as schools, roads and hospitals, the Press Trust of India said.

Mr. Rao who was in Aagasad to lay the foundation stone for a \$1.6 billion refinery promoted by Oman, said the proposal would help people in regions where foreign firms were setting up plants.

The plan was in the final stages of consideration, the news agency quoted Mr. Rao as saying.

Opposition parties have criticised Mr. Rao, who launched an economic reform programme in 1991, of ignoring the poor and minorities in favour of rich multinationals setting up businesses in India.

Recently Mr. Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh chaired foreign direct investors for not pumping enough money into India's economy.

Mr. Singh said last week that the opening of India's insurance sector, changes in labour laws and public sector disinvestment will have to wait until after next year's general elections.

Mr. Singh, the architect of India's economic liberalisation,

told a conference sponsored by the World Economic Forum and Confederation of Indian Industry that the steps were part of the "unfinished agenda of reforms" to be presented to the next government.

"Any new government will have to take the problem of public sector reforms seriously," the finance minister said in reference to planned disinvestment in loss-making state firms.

"The government is also not in a position to bring a bill pertaining to opening of the insurance sector and the new government will have to take care of this issue," he added.

Mr. Singh said changes in labour laws giving employers more latitude to hire and fire workers would also have to wait along with the establishment of a regulatory framework for takeovers.

The finance minister stressed that the economic reforms begun after Mr. Rao took power in June 1991 were here to stay, regardless of whether Mr. Rao's Congress (I) Party won the elections expected to take place in March or April.

"The direction of economic reforms is not a controversial subject in our country," he said.

Mr. Singh also said that the government was determined to bring about a further reduction in the fiscal deficit, estimated to be 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product in fiscal 1995-96, which began in April.

Cuban minister eyes 1996 with guarded optimism

HAVANA (AFP) — Cuba's economy should show modest growth in 1996 after four years of economic free fall and a slight turn around last year, Economy Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez said in an interview.

Growth in 1996 should build on the 0.7 per cent rate last year, though without "spectacular leaps," Mr. Rodriguez was quoted as saying in the weekly La Habana Opciones.

With the collapse of its economic support, the former Soviet Bloc, the Caribbean island's gross domestic product plunged about 37 per cent between 1989 and 1993, according to government data.

But in 1994, Cuba's economy grew 0.7 per cent, and official estimates for this year put the expansion figure at an optimistic maximum of three per cent, with no minimum mentioned.

"The shortfalls are still substantial," Mr. Rodriguez said. "There is still a long way to go to achieve the levels that are necessary in a series of sectors such as food, services, such as transport, and electric power production."

"We have a series of unresolved problems in the economy," Mr. Rodriguez said,

"and the fact that some signs of recovery begin to be seen does not mean that we are now out of the 'special period,'" as President Fidel Castro's government has dubbed the post-Soviet economic tailspin.

Mr. Rodriguez said the economic outlook would be particularly promising "if we manage to solve some of the problems we have" such as boosting sugar output, long Cuba's economic mainstay, and securing medium- and long-range international financing.

One bright spot has been the booming tourism industry, which has been a leading foreign exchange earner, though foreign investment has been on the rise in other fields such as light industry.

And the communist government has launched market-oriented economic reforms including farm cooperatives, limited self-employment and farmers' markets with prices set by supply and demand.

Yet Mr. Rodriguez downplayed the likelihood the government might legalise small and mid-sized private businesses as part of its reform plans, or broaden the range of self-employment jobs for which government-issued licenses are required.

European Union urged to supply technology to Arab Gulf countries

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The European Union (EU) should take advantage of new measures in Arab Gulf states to protect intellectual property by setting up projects that will help them acquire technology, a regional study has said.

The study said the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) needed technology to expand their limited industrial sector and reduce reliance on highly volatile oil earnings which provide for the bulk of their income.

"GCC states have shown sincere intentions to deepen technological cooperation with the EU by enforcing laws to protect copyrights and intellectual property," the Riyadh-based GCC said in the study. "EU states should in turn show sincere intentions... They should encourage their companies to invest in the GCC to ensure transfer of technology."

The study is the latest in a series of GCC calls on its main economic partner, the EU, to help Gulf states acquire industrial technology through the establishment of joint projects in the oil-rich region.

But the EU and other industrial giants have been reluctant to set up large ventures in the GCC on the

grounds that it is a relatively small market and investment laws are restrictive concerning foreign ownership.

The two sides have held several meetings, the latest of which was in Oman last month. But they have failed to reach agreements on joint enterprises.

An EU study published in November said European companies did not consider the Middle East a priority in investment due to political risks and inadequate investment laws. It said investment opportunities were more attractive in Japan, the United States, eastern Europe and the Pacific region.

"We should stress that if the EU countries continue to hesitate in facilitating the transfer of technology to the GCC, our countries can obtain the required technology from other sources," the GCC secretary said.

"GCC states do not need EU projects which do not serve comprehensive development. So, cooperation

between the GCC and the EU should be based on a balanced and equal relationship that will serve the interests of both," it added.

It said GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — were among the top investors in the EU and they accounted for nearly 43 per cent of the total EU exports to the Middle East.

Over the past decade, GCC imports from EU states averaged nearly \$19 billion, accounting for around one third of its total imports. The six members are also the top oil suppliers to the EU, with crude exports of more than four million barrels per day, a figure set to grow in the near future.

GCC states, which control around 45 per cent of the world's proven crude reserves, are concentrating on industrial development because other non-oil sectors are limited given their desert nature.

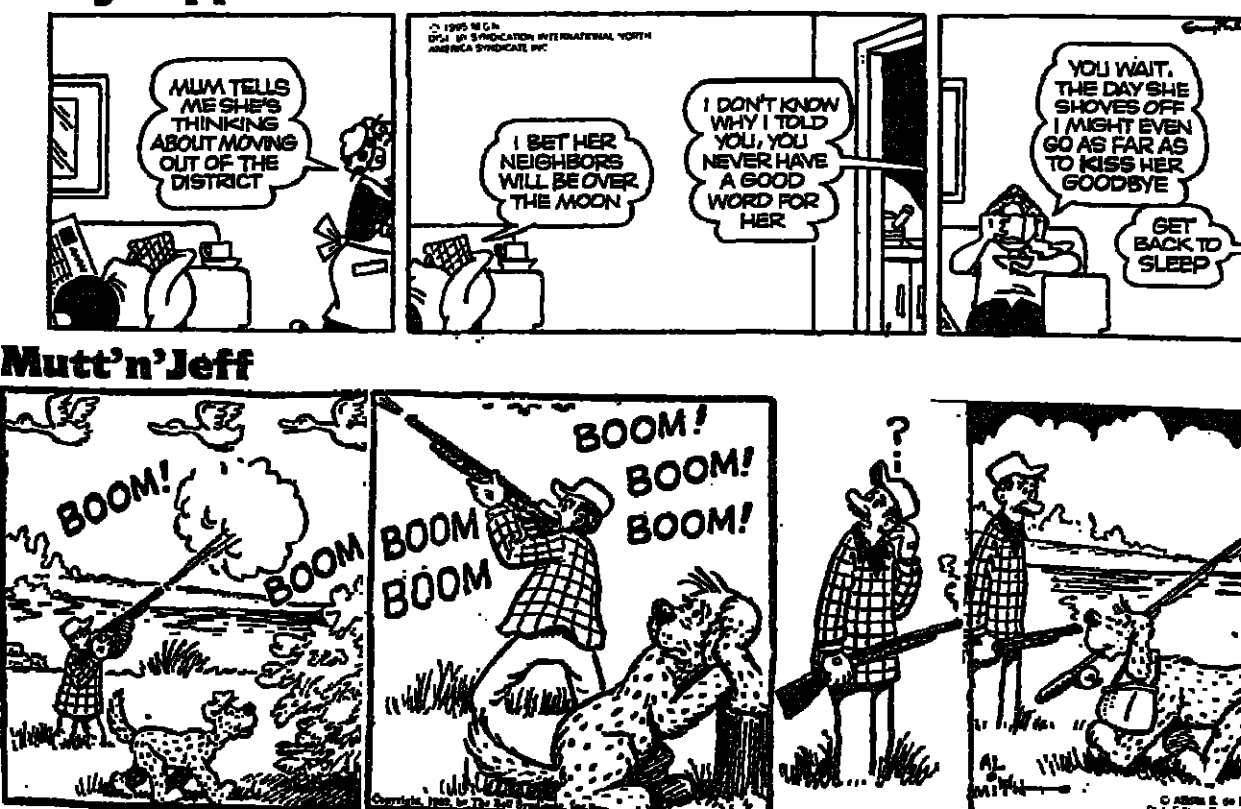
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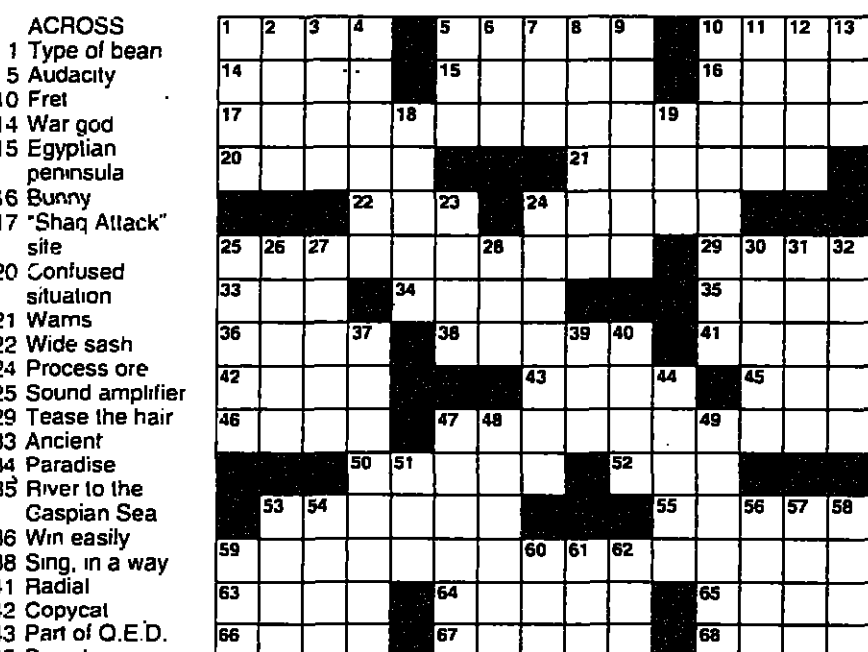
Peanuts



Mutt'n'Jeff

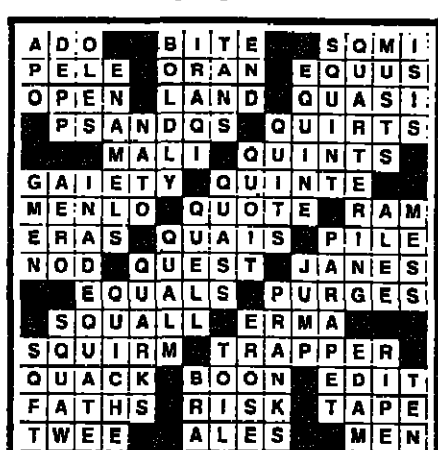


THE Daily Crossword by Chuck Deodene



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Yesterday's puzzle solved:



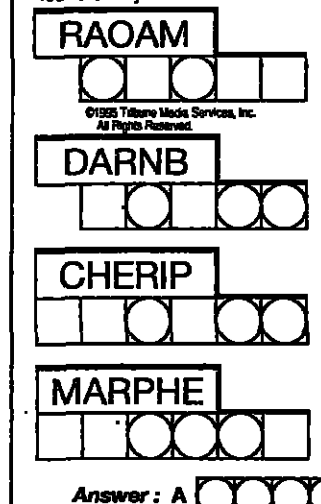
It's really neat!

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JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer: A (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHINY TACKY JUGGLE UNCLAD

Answer: What the doctor considered an on-stage emergency — A CASTING CALL.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get in touch with those whose ideas are quite different to your own, and you gain valuable knowledge. Get your wardrobe in order.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be tactful in dealing with your partner since there is apt to be a great deal of activity in various spheres.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to get into worldly activities and know what is going on around you so that you know how best to proceed later tonight.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get at those weekend duties which need your personal consideration and save time during the next week.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You know just what will make you most happy today, so turn your thoughts and action in such direction.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have to be calm and considerate at home today otherwise a battle can occur at the drop of a bat.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be more concerned with what you believe in and plan four life more intelligently. If you go out to visit good friends today, use much care on the road.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are apt to be too greedy today in going after practical affairs, so tone down and be reasonable.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have many personal needs today, but don't be forceful with others in order to gain them for your progress.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You feel stifled and want to get out to new avenues of expression today, but first keep any promises you have made.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You desire seeing as many friends as you can and should do so today, since much good can come of this.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Curb your outside activities today so that you do not over-tire yourself. Take time for needed meditation.

Birthstones of December: Turquoise — Zircon

DAILY

uncertainties still surrounded the introduction of a single European currency.

He also said that the choice of euro as the name for the controversial currency was uninspired and cast serious doubt on the ambitious timetable for its introduction.

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Steelers clinch 1st round bye, Packers a playoff berth

PITTSBURGH (R) — The streaking Pittsburgh Steelers won their eighth consecutive game on Saturday, clinching a first-round bye in the AFC playoffs with a 41-27 victory over the New England Patriots.

The Steelers (11-4), who had already clinched the AFC Central Division title, smashed open a 27-27 game with two touchdowns in the final minute and a half.

With the game tied and looking like it might be headed for overtime, Ernie Mills caught a 62-yard touchdown pass from Neil O'Donnell with 1:28 remaining. Chris O'Donnell then returned a fumble for a touchdown just 19 seconds later to seal the win and eliminate the Patriots (6-9) from playoff contention.

New England was similarly stung in the first half when Pittsburgh struck for two touchdowns in the final two minutes of the second quarter. Yancy Thigpen caught a 14-yard touchdown pass from O'Donnell and defensive end Brenton Buckner returned a Patriots' fumble for a score.

O'Donnell completed 14-of-25 passes for 195 yards and two touchdowns. New England quarterback Drew Bledsoe was 39-of-60 for 336 yards and three touchdowns as he rallied his team from a 24-12 deficit to tie its 27-27 before things unravelled in the end.

"We had about 38 guys play their butts off and about seven that I wished we would have left at home," said Patriots coach Bill Parcells.

"Mistakes killed us," he continued. "The two turnovers in the last two minutes of the half and the game cost us 14 points and the game."

New England tight end Ben Coates caught 11 passes for 87 yards and two touchdowns. But it was Coates whose fumble after a catch was scooped up by Oldham who scampered 27 yards for the final touchdown.

"We didn't come out and play the type of defence we played all year," said Pittsburgh linebacker Greg Lloyd who forced Coates' fumble.

"We were back on our heels. But we lined up and made the plays we had to."

In New Orleans, Brett Favre passed for four first-half touchdowns to lead the Green Bay Packers to a 34-23 victory over the Saints and playoff berth.

The win was the fifth in six games for the Packers (10-5), who can clinch their first NFC Central Division title since 1972 with a loss or tie by Detroit (8-6) Sunday or a win next Sunday against Pittsburgh.

Favre completed 12-of-18 passes for 203 yards and Robert Brooks had four catches for 105 yards and two touchdowns in the first half when the Packers built a 28-7 lead.

Favre finished 21-of-30 for 308 yards and Brooks ended up with five receptions for 118 yards.

The Green Bay quarterback, who will start for the

NFC in the pro bowl, has a league-leading 36 touchdown passes this season, surpassing the club-record of 33 he set in 1994.

Saints quarterback Jim Everett passed for 364 yards, including scoring passes of four and six yards to Torrance Small, a New Orleans fell to 6-9.

Packers defensive end Reggie White, the NFL's all-time sacks leader, played well despite an injured left hamstring. It was believed White would need season-ending surgery on the hamstring, but the durable star pass rusher made a miraculous recovery.

NFL STANDINGS

American Football Conference

Eastern Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|--------------|---|----|---|-----|-----|
| Buffalo | 9 | 5 | 0 | 310 | 287 |
| Miami | 8 | 6 | 0 | 337 | 287 |
| Indianapolis | 8 | 6 | 0 | 297 | 282 |
| New England | 6 | 9 | 0 | 287 | 367 |
| NY Jets | 3 | 11 | 0 | 227 | 349 |

Central Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|--------------|----|----|---|-----|-----|
| x-Pittsburgh | 11 | 4 | 0 | 388 | 303 |
| Cincinnati | 6 | 8 | 0 | 312 | 324 |
| Houston | 5 | 9 | 0 | 297 | 301 |
| Cleveland | 4 | 10 | 0 | 242 | 322 |
| Jacksonville | 3 | 11 | 0 | 251 | 339 |

Western Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|---------------|----|---|---|-----|-----|
| x-Kansas City | 11 | 3 | 0 | 312 | 221 |
| Oakland | 8 | 6 | 0 | 310 | 257 |
| Denver | 7 | 7 | 0 | 340 | 297 |
| Seattle | 7 | 7 | 0 | 316 | 330 |
| San Diego | 7 | 7 | 0 | 267 | 282 |

Eastern Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|--------------|----|----|---|-----|-----|
| x-Dallas | 10 | 4 | 0 | 377 | 258 |
| Philadelphia | 9 | 5 | 0 | 283 | 298 |
| NY Giants | 5 | 9 | 0 | 253 | 292 |
| Arizona | 4 | 10 | 0 | 242 | 364 |
| Washington | 4 | 10 | 0 | 271 | 319 |

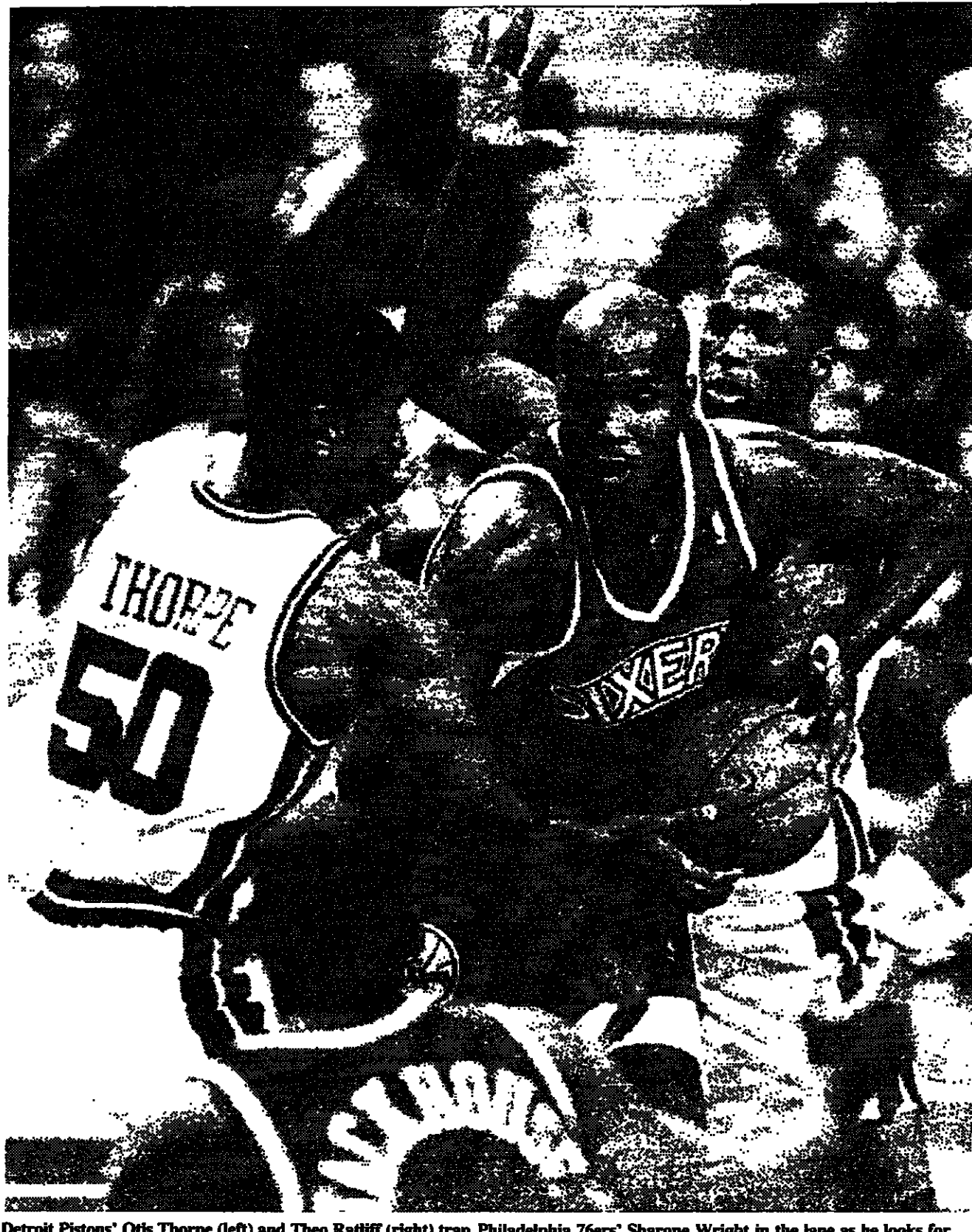
Central Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|-------------|----|---|---|-----|-----|
| Y-Green Bay | 10 | 5 | 0 | 380 | 295 |
| Detroit | 8 | 6 | 0 | 355 | 326 |
| Minnesota | 8 | 6 | 0 | 358 | 321 |
| Chicago | 7 | 7 | 0 | 341 | 336 |
| Tampa Bay | 7 | 7 | 0 | 218 | 267 |

Western Division

| | W | L | T | PF | PA |
|---------------|----|---|---|-----|-----|
| San Francisco | 10 | 4 | 0 | 393 | 200 |
| Atlanta | 8 | 6 | 0 | 317 | 301 |
| St. Louis | 7 | 7 | 0 | 264 | 342 |
| Carolina | 6 | 8 | 0 | 251 | 288 |
| New Orleans | 6 | 9 | 0 | 307 | 348 |

X-Clinched division title
Y-Clinched playoff berth



Detroit Pistons' Otis Thorpe (left) and Theo Ratliff (right) trap Philadelphia 76ers' Shaaron Wright in the lane as he looks for some help (Reuters photo)

Newcastle defy the doubters

LONDON (R) — A year ago Newcastle's championship hopes were high, only to founder around the Christmas season as they garnered a meagre five points from seven matches.

The reverse at Chelsea a week ago, only their second defeat of the season, set many to wondering if a repeat was on the cards.

A visit from Everton, un-

beaten in their last six premier matches and the side that ousted them from last year's F.A. Cup, was probably not the ideal fixture they would have wished on Saturday.

They were hardly helped by having to call in reserve goalkeeper Czech Pavel Smicek for his first start of the season when a hip injury sidelined Shaka Hislop.

But a first half goal from England striker Les Ferdinand proved sufficient to keep Newcastle flying high at the top of the table despite having defender John Beresford sent off shortly before the interval.

Afterwards it was Smicek who Newcastle boss Kevin Keegan singled out for his outstanding display.

"Pavel did tremendously well especially when you realise he came in under such severe pressure," said Keegan.

"It isn't easy to play as well as that in those circumstances

but Pavel was superb and showed why he is a cult hero up here."

A first-half stop from Daniel Amokachi was of the highest order but the Czech then excelled himself when Anders Limpar's late effort deflected off Steve Howey.

"How he kept it out I just don't know," said Keegan. "Maybe the crowd helped by blowing really hard but it was still a great save. I don't think anybody else in the country could have done it."

Keegan had no arguments with Beresford's sending off.

"The rule says that John had to go and although (assistant) Arthur Cox thought he might escape with just a booking we had no arguments with the referee."

"What it meant was that everybody had to work tremendously hard. Every one of them showed they were prepared to battle. They had to stand up and be

counted because there was no room on the bus for passengers today but everybody did all I could ask of them."

Instead of Newcastle, it is their championship rivals who are floundering.

Arsenal and Middlesbrough fell back from third and fourth places with a late snatched draw against Chelsea for the former and a defeat at champions Blackburn for the latter.

Manchester United are best placed to challenge Newcastle but they face an extremely tough fixture on Sunday with a trip to Liverpool. And even a win there would still leave them four points behind the leaders who have 42 points from 18 games.

In the constant merry-go-round of changing places behind the north of England club, Tottenham popped up into third but nine points off the pace with a 1-0 win over Wimbledon who have now gone 14 games without a win.

European Championship draw

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — Draw for soccer: 16-nation European Championship finals, made here on Sunday, between June 8 and June 30:

Group A

A1: England
A2: Switzerland
A3: Holland
A4: Scotland

Group B

B1: Spain
B2: Bulgaria
B3: Romania
B4: France

Group C

C1: Germany
C2: Czech Republic
C3: Italy
C4: Russia

Group D

D1: Denmark
D2: Portugal
D3: Turkey
D4: Croatia

Venables gets backing from F.A. chief

LONDON (R) — English Football Association chief Sir Bert Millichip wants to see Terry Venables guide England into the 1998 World Cup — and beyond.

In a big boost for the under-fire national coach, whose future was this week clouded by the comments of F.A. international committee chairman Noel White, Millichip said on Saturday he wanted to offer Venables a new three-year deal.

"I would like to see Terry in charge not only until the next World Cup but until 1999," said F.A. Chairman Millichip, whose plan would have to win approval from White and his fellow committee members.

While White insisted Venables retained the F.A.'s full backing going into next summer's European Championship finals, he admitted he was concerned after the former Tottenham boss was criticised by a judge over some of the evidence he had given in a civil court case.

But Millichip said: "I can see absolutely nothing in all that has been directed towards Terry that would trouble us."

"His future with us has always been dependent on the outcome of allegations against him connected with his football dealings. That situation has never changed. "But he has been incredibly honest with us and we have made our own investigations too."

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What now for European soccer?

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — One day after the European Union's highest court declared soccer transfer fees and quotas on foreigners null and void, many of the world's best and richest leagues were at a loss Saturday as to what the future would bring.

The powers-that-be often spoke in apocalyptic terms. The upstart unions and soccer rebel Jean-Marie Bosman spoke of the dawning of a new era.

UEFA president Lennart Johansson could only assess "the mess" the European Court of Justice had created in calling the two systems illegal. Others called it "catastrophic."

"The law of the jungle has been abolished," said Bosman, after the court ruled it illegal that teams demand a transfer fee for players once their contract has expired. The fee had been a cornerstone of European soccer.

"We destroy the system that we have had for 100 years," Johansson said, warning of financial problems for small clubs unable to cash in on transfer fees.

The court also showed the red card to league limits on non-nationals from other European nations, a system vested in the century-old traditions of local teams. Limits ranging from three to five non-nationals on a team.

Now, expect more than a zest of American-style free-agency, with huge contracts for top stars, and the emergence of teams representing a melting pot of European talent.

But throw parity out the window, if nothing is found to counter the landmark decisions.

Soccer authorities said the transfer fees were designed to spread the wealth to poorer clubs and the limits on foreign players were aimed at keeping rich clubs from monopolizing everything. They were the only checks and balances in a sport in which the underdog still had a chance to shine briefly.

Overnight, that is gone with no replacement such as extensive distribution of fees from broadcast rights or training and apprentice compensation.

The only possible way to offset the loss now appears to be good television deals.

"Soccer will be saved by TV and sponsorship," said Sir John Hall, chairman of England's Premier League leader Newcastle United.

The court did not even leave a transition period.

"It would have done no harm to have given us five days to think about implementing these regulations," Johansson said.

"We'll start talking and in the end, we'll get out of it," said Theo Van Seggelen, secretary general of the European Players Union, FIFPRO.

Friday's ruling also was a financial boost for Bosman, who started the legal proceedings five years ago after he was denied a transfer from his local team FC Liege to Dunkirk in France even though his contract had expired.

He is now well on his way to earning as much as \$1 million in damages from a Liege court.

Tyson has a way to go before he's back

PHILADELPHIA (R) — When Mike Tyson fought his first fight in four years last August, the bout against the hopeless Peter McNeeley was dubbed, "he's back."

Yes, Tyson knocked out Buster Mathis Jr. in the third round on Saturday with a combination beginning with a right uppercut. But the former heavyweight champion of the world showed everyone that he has a long way to go before he can justify his self-acclaimed title as "the baddest man on the planet."

He was not even close to being the baddest fighter in the spectrum last night. A woman was.

Christy Martin displayed the poise, the power and the accuracy that Tyson wished he had when he knocked out the light-hitting Mathis at two minutes and 32 seconds of the third round.

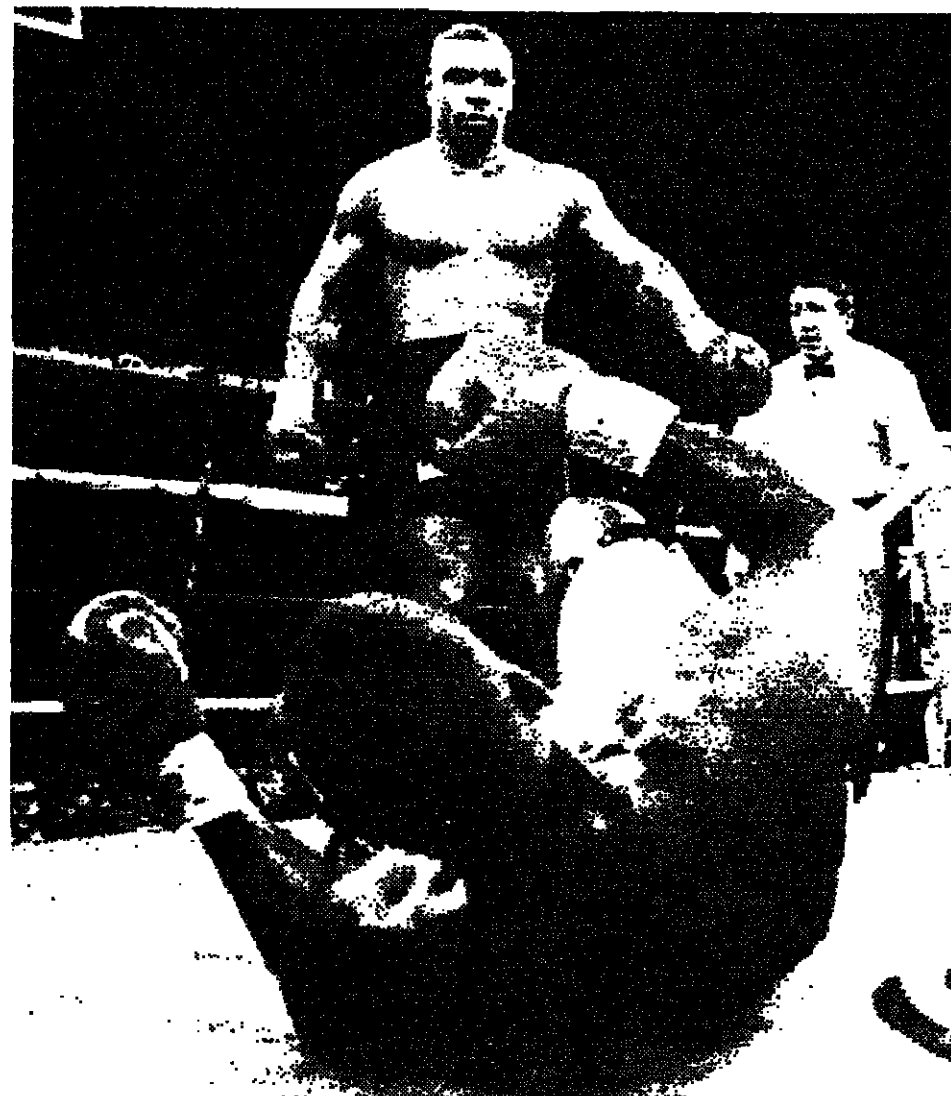
Martin, the coal miner's daughter from West Virginia, knocked out Erica Schindlin with a classic left hook that sent her mouthpiece flying into the fourth row and dropped her for the count.

On the other hand, Tyson was missing with so many lefts and rights that he air conditioned all those empty seats in the spectrum, where the fans stayed away in droves. Only about 8,000 of the 18,000 seats were filled, and about 2,000 of those were papered with giveaways by promoter Don King, anxious to fill the seats for the television viewers.

The happiest man in the building on Saturday had to be Briton Frank Bruno, who is scheduled to put up his World Boxing Council title against Tyson on March 16 in Las Vegas.

"It couldn't be a better time to get Mike Tyson," Bruno said. "He's rusty. I can't wait to fight him."

Tyson needs an army to chip off the rust he has accumulated in the three years he spent in prison for rape before his release last March. One of the biggest



Heavyweight boxer Mike Tyson stands over the third round of their fight (Reuters photo) Buster Mathis Jr. after knocking him out in

questions in the Tyson camp is whether his army of cheerleaders will tell the emperor that, while he may not be naked, his clothes need a lot of mending.

The McNeeley bout probably should be dismissed as an accurate gauge of Tyson's talents.

McNeeley, who charged Tyson like an awkward, wild bull, throwing roundhouse punches which he seemed to hope came with homing devices, was stopped in 89

seconds after two knock-downs.

But Mathis, 25, was not awkward. He fought an intelligent bout against Tyson. He did not, however, have the firepower to do any damage, although he landed several combinations to Tyson's head.

Even Mathis's trainer, Joey Fariello, readily acknowledged in the run-up to the scheduled 12-round bout that his fighter would be "throwing beebees and Tyson

is firing bombs."

That's all the more reason to give Mathis credit for a gutsy performance.

Mathis, now 20-1, fought inside against the 29-year-old Tyson, knowing his only chance was to smother the former champion's punches and tie him up whenever Tyson appeared ready to unleash his arsenal.

Tyson (43-1) came out quickly in the first round, but missed with a haymaker left hook that the bobbing and

weaving Mathis ducked beneath. Mathis, 224 pounds (101.6 kg) immediately tied up Tyson and kept his head in Tyson's chest.

Toward the end of the first round, Tyson, a chiseled 219 pounds (99.3 kg) landed a left hook, but not cleanly. And at the end of the round the two men were slugging it out for a few moments after the bell.

The crowd cheered Mathis as he walked back to his corner.

Tyson came out jabbing in the second round. But Mathis bullied Tyson into the ropes and got off a quick right to Tyson's body and a left to his head.

It was more of the same in the third round. Mathis shunted Tyson into the ropes, and the former champion missed with wide punches and allowed himself to be held by Mathis.

But then Tyson unloaded his barrage, sending Mathis crumpling to the canvas.

Despite what many ringsiders thought was a lackluster Tyson performance, the former champion was impressed by his night's work.

"I knew every move he was making," Tyson said. "I knew those punches would knock him out or hurt him severely because he didn't see those punches."

Mathis was candid. "When he dropped me, I looked up and (the referee) was on five. I didn't hear one, two, three or four. I just heard five, six, seven. I said 'what's up? This guy's going fast.' I got up at 10."

Mathis related that Tyson told him after the fight that, "you're my brother, you're my brother and don't forget that." "If he's my brother I got a couple of questions for my mother."

And fight fans have more than a couple of questions for Tyson.

The fight was Mathis' first since his father, Buster, a heavyweight contender in the 1960s, died Sept. 6.

Fiorentina close in on AC Milan

ROME (APF) — AC Milan had to settle for a 1-1 draw at home to Torino on Sunday, leaving the backdoor open for Fiorentina to move into second place in the Serie A, just a point behind.

Milan, who were dumped out of the Italian Cup quarter-finals by second division Bologna in midweek, were a goal down after just five minutes when Ruggiero Rizzitelli struck home from the penalty spot for Torino.

However, Croatian midfielder Zvonimir Boban equalized after another five minutes, saving the blushes at San Siro with a header.

Milan, without their inspirational forward Dejan Savicevic, who pulled a muscle in training on Friday, had virtually all of the possession. But they were incapable of turning that domination into goals.

Torino coach Franco Scoglio was sporting enough to admit: "On points, AC Milan certainly deserved to have won."

Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta was once again Fiorentina's hero. Having scored a brace in the previous week's 3-0 win over Udinese, the South American bagged another two in Sunday's 3-1 win at Atalanta.

With 10 goals, Batistuta is now the league's joint top scorer with Bari's Igor Protti.

Fiorentina swapped places with Parma, now third after a 1-1 draw at Bari, which also saw Parma's Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla dismissed for two bookable offences.

Protti converted a 45th minute penalty for his 10th of the season for Bari, and it looked to be enough for three points until Alessandro Melli bagged an equaliser in the 89th minute.

For entertainment value, the place to be was Rome, where Lazio were 6-3 winners over Sampdoria.

Swedish international Jonas Thern opened the scoring in as Roma's 2-0 win at Napoli, while Piacenza beat Cremonese 2-1.

PSG's bad boys earn a draw, still in lead

PARIS (AFP) — Paris St Germain had two men sent off and conceded a late penalty to St Etienne on Saturday night, but the French league leaders still came away with a 1-1 draw.

Daniel Bravo and Francis Ilacer were dismissed for professional fouls in the seventh and 85th minutes, both having hauled down St Etienne forwards as they headed for goal.

Goalkeeper Bernard Lama was meanwhile lucky to be sanctioned only with a penalty after flooring Christophe Ohrel as he rounded the PSG and French international keeper in the 64th minute.

Jean-Philippe Secchet, a pre-season signing from PSG, converted the spot-kick against his old club.

But just two minutes later, Brazilian Rai headed on a floated cross and Panamanian striker Dely Valdes, who had hit the woodwork twice in the opening 15 minutes, equalised with a stunning scissor-kick.

dez later ignored questions about the sending-offs, saying: "You've got to congratulate them. They were down to 10 at the start and down to nine at the finish. It's a thoroughly deserved draw."

As French football takes a Christmas break until Jan. 10, PSG finish the year with a six-point lead at the top.

Lens, who are second, drew 0-0 with third-placed Auxerre, who are a full 10 points off the pace.

It was a frustrating night for Auxerre, who failed to repeat Wednesday night's 2-0 league win over the same side, and not much better for Lens, whose Eric Sikora missed a penalty.

Nantes playmaker Japhet N'Doram of Chad scored both goals — a penalty in the first-half and a close-range strike in the second — as the French champions beat Bordeaux 2-0 to go fourth in the table.

Bordeaux played the last 20 minutes with 10 men after striker Antony Bancarel was given his marching orders.

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Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 5 4 2 ♣ 10 6 5 3 ♠ 4 4

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2NT Pass 2NT Pass
What action do you take?

A - Your one-trump relit limited you to a maximum of 9-10 points, yet partner still invited game. Your five-card suit and high honor in partner's suit improve your holding beyond its high-card count, so accept. Bid three no trump.

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 9 4 ♣ 3 7 ♠ 9 8 6 5 4 3 10

The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass 2♠ Pass
What action do you take?

A - Partner might have next-to-nothing for the correction to two spades. Since you have only 17 high-card points, a flat hand and just moderate three-card support, it would be presumptuous of you to look for game. Pass.

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 5 ♠ 9 4 3 2 4 6 3

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

A - Don't count your spade singleton as worth two points, giving you a total of 11, which would justify a response of two diamonds. A singleton in partner's suit is a flaw, not an asset, and should be discounted.

Respond one no trump to deny the value for a two-over-one response.

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 9 8 3 2 ♠ 10 6 5 3 4 4 7

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

A - This is not clear, by any means. Partner could have six clubs and four diamonds, so we are somewhat in favor of bidding two diamonds now. However, if you choose the rather more conservative raise to three clubs, that could easily be the winning action.

Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 10 7 3 ♠ 9 8 7 10 6 4 10 9

The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

A - You have a fair two-suiter with reasonable suits, so there is no reason why you should not complete the picture of your distribution. Bid three diamonds.

Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 9 8 5 2 ♠ 10 6 5 3 4 4

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
What action do you take?

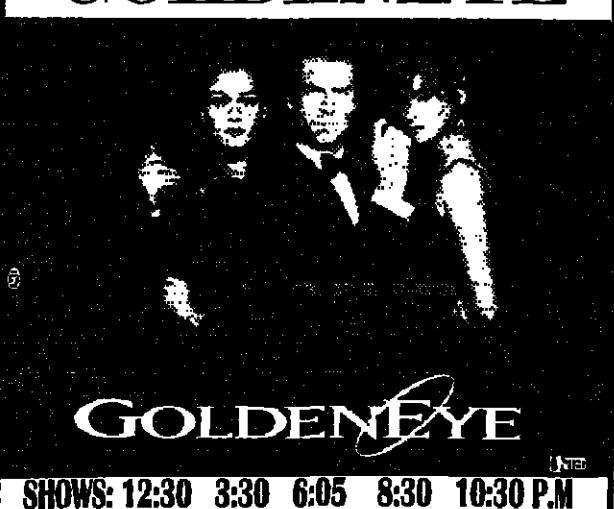
A - Partner's jump to three diamonds is invitational, not forcing. You have as little as the law allows for your initial response, and no reason to presume that partner has either four hearts or three spades. Pass.

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Under the Patronage of his Excellency Mr Bernard BAJOLET
Ambassador of France in Jordan
The French Embassy and the French Cultural Center
cordially invite you to attend

the projection of the film

LE COLONEL CHABERT

on Wednesday, 20 December 1995 at 8 p.m.
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq devalues dinar for tourists

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi authorities have devalued the tourist rate of the dinar from 600 to 1,000 dinars to the U.S. dollar, a bank official said Sunday. The new rate was intended to "encourage people to use authorised outlets" to change money, the official said. The tourist rate, introduced in 1994, is used by state banks and by licensed exchange houses, which purchase foreign currency but do not sell it. Two other rates exist for the dinar — the official rate of 3.2 dinars to the dollar, used by the government, and a black market rate of more than 2,500 dinars to the dollar. The Iraqi currency has been in free fall since the United Nations imposed crippling sanctions on Baghdad following the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The embargo prevents Iraq from exporting oil, which previously provided 90 per cent of its foreign currency revenue.

Bahrain 'ready for war with Qatar'

CAIRO (AP) — Bahrain's minister of defence was quoted Sunday as saying his tiny Gulf nation was willing to go to war with Qatar rather than give up disputed islands to the neighbouring emirate. However, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa also said in an interview with the Egyptian opposition daily Al Wafd that Bahrain is ready for a political settlement of the dispute. "Qatar claims some one-third of our territories. This is illogical and illegitimate. We told them that this is impossible and it means that we will enter hundreds of wars before giving up even one island," he said. "We hope it will be solved by the politicians because the military has only one solution," Sheikh Khalifa added.

U.S. causing crises to sell arms — Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati accused the United States of creating artificial crises in the Gulf to justify arms sales to the region, Iranian Television reported on Sunday. Even though the main pretext for the presence of foreign forces in the region — Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait — had been removed, foreign fleets were still carrying out "provocative military manoeuvres," Mr. Velayati told a two-day international seminar on the Gulf. Arab countries were also continuing to spend huge sums on these exercises, paying for the dispatch of U.S. forces to the region, he said. The United States was continuing its policy of "dual containment" and maintaining economic pressure and sanctions on Iran in an effort to impose its own policies on the Gulf, he said. Mr. Velayati said Iran was willing to resolve problems and misunderstandings with its neighbours, who he urged to put aside old enmities and false disputes and lay down conditions for friendship and cooperation.

Arafat plans visits to Qatar, UAE

DOHA (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will this week make his first official visits to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates since the strain of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, Palestinian diplomats said on Sunday. They said the heads of the two Gulf Arab states are expected to hold talks with Mr. Arafat when he visits Doha on Monday and Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. Mr. Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), angered Gulf Arab states by his sympathy for Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Palestinian ties with most Gulf states, except Kuwait, have improved since the crisis. Qatar last month sent a resident representative to the Gaza-based PNA and like the UAE, has recognised new Palestinian passports issued by the authority. Over 10,000 Palestinians, mostly workers and their families, live in Qatar and some 50,000 reside in neighbouring UAE.

Woman given U.S. visa to help brother

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian woman denied a U.S. visa despite pleas she must donate bone marrow to save her severely ill brother was given the travel document Sunday after calls from American doctors to the U.S. embassy here. The initial refusal was because the woman, Wedad Asteafanov, did not present the proper medical documents, said embassy spokesman Rick Roberts. "She just applied for a tourist visa, without anything from the hospital, without explaining about the blood matching," Mr. Roberts said. Mrs. Asteafanov was found to have a perfect bone marrow match for her brother, Mauris, 45, a taxi driver in New York. He immigrated to the United States 17 years ago and was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia last year. Dr. John Loscalzo of the hematology-oncology department at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, Long Island, said Mr. Asteafanov would certainly die without the bone marrow transplant.

Cyprus protests U.S. missile sales to Turkey

NICOSIA (AP) — President Glafcos Clerides has protested the sale of U.S. missiles to Turkey, the semi-official Cyprus news agency reported. The sale of 120 Atacm missiles to Turkey "is an unfriendly act towards Cyprus," said Mr. Clerides. The missiles, with a range of 165 kilometres, could be used against Cyprus, even if they are based in Turkey and not on the war-divided island, Mr. Clerides was quoted as saying. "How can such a political move by the United States help consolidate feelings of security and stability or assist efforts for a peaceful solution of the problem," he said.

Jewish minor convicted of murdering Arab

TEL AVIV (AP) — A juvenile court on Sunday convicted a Jewish settler teenager of shooting to death an Arab farmer as he tended his West Bank field, Israel Radio reported. The name of the settler, a resident of the West Bank settlement of Shilo, was not revealed because he was being tried as a minor. He was 16 at the time of the murder two years ago. The report said the youth had just completed guard duty early on Dec. 9, 1993, when he took his Uzi submachine-gun into the nearby village of Turmus Ayya. There he saw Khamis Abu Awad and his wife Fatma plowing a field, the report said. The settler fired at Abu Awad — who fell from the first bullet moaning in pain — and continued to fire one or two more shots at the man until he died, Israel Radio said. The suspect, an American-born youth, fled to the United States, but after nine months he turned himself in and was extradited to Israel, the report said. He pleaded innocent in court, but was found guilty based on testimony from Fatma Abu Awad, who witnessed her husband's murder, the radio said.

U.N. human rights envoy visits Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A special U.N. envoy on human rights is on a visit here to investigate the rights situation of religious minorities in Iran, informed sources said Sunday. The U.N. rapporteur for religious intolerance, Abdul Fattah Amor from Tunisia, arrived here Friday and has already held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The first U.N. human rights envoy to visit here in four years, Mr. Amor was to meet Sunday with Iran's Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the sources said. Iran said earlier this month that it would receive U.N. human rights rapporteurs, but warned in advance that any reports must be based on "facts." Four years ago U.N. human rights envoy Reynaldo Galindo Pohl wrote a report critical of the situation in the Islamic republic. Tehran accused him of bias and denied him a visa for further visits. Mr. Galindo Pohl was recently replaced by a Canadian, Maurice Danby Copithorne. A U.N. rapporteur on freedom of opinion and speech, India's Abid Hussain, is also slated to visit on Jan. 5.

Ex-senator and judge calls for amendments to Constitution

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Former Senator Najib Al Rashdan called on Sunday for amendments to the Constitution in favour of wider public freedoms and lesser powers for the executive authority.

Mr. Rashdan, who was speaking at a specialised seminar entitled "For the Sake of a Democratic Jordan" and organised by the Jordanian Democratic Thought Forum, said that introducing amendments to the Constitution were necessary and should go hand in hand with the democratic process.

Mr. Rashdan proposed an amendment to article seven of the Constitution, which states that personal freedoms are safeguarded. He said the article should be strengthened. The amendment proposed by Mr. Rashdan stipulate that personal liberties should be safeguarded and no one should be arrested or denied the right

to move except with a court order.

The article should say that any infringement on public liberties guaranteed by the Constitution is a crime and violators should be punished, Mr. Rashdan said.

"The reason for this amendment," he said, "is that those who have been used to martial law tactics underestimate people's rights and freedoms. They violate them constantly."

"This provision prevents the occurrence of these acts, especially if the penal code is amended to stipulate a deterrent punishment for violations," he added.

Mr. Rashdan also proposed that the 40 members of the Upper House of Parliament (Senate) be elected rather than appointed by His Majesty the King.

The amendment was seconded by participants and lecturers alike and was described as a major step that should be taken to consolidate democracy in the Kingdom.

dom. Mr. Rashdan also proposed that a paragraph should be added to article 74 which tackles the issue of dissolution of the Lower House of Parliament. He said the government should resign immediately after a dissolution of Parliament and that parliamentary elections should be conducted by a transitional government.

"Any government which has been behind the dissolution of Parliament should not be the one to supervise the procedures of new elections," he said.

Mr. Rashdan also said that Article 95 which states that ten members or more of the Senate or the House have the right to submit a draft law for discussions should be amended to give the right to any member of either house to submit a proposal.

He also proposed the replacement of the phrase "in accordance with the law" that comes at the end of several articles of the Constitution by

explanatory phrases or rulings.

Ibrahim Anzawi, dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Yarmouk, supported most of Mr. Rashdan's proposed amendments but called for more.

While Mr. Rashdan said that the establishment of a constitutional court was necessary and should be included in the Constitution in Article 122 that deals with the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution, Mr. Anzawi said that a constitutional court should replace the higher council.

Mr. Rashdan, however, argued that public freedoms and enhancement of democracy mainly depends on the people in power and not on the law.

"It is matter of application," Mr. Rashdan said. "If you give an unjust law to a fair judge, you ensure the rule of justice," he said. "And vice-versa is true."

Experts propose concrete steps to fight corruption in Jordan

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day seminar ended here on Sunday after adopting a series of recommendations that call for concrete measures within the government and in the legal system to fight corruption.

The recommendations of the seminar entitled "Integrity in Government," organised by the ministries of administrative development and justice and funded by the World Bank, called for developing an employment criteria for appointing high ranking officials, introducing a mandatory assets declaration for new members of the cabinet, establishing a code of ethics for media, parliament and civil servants, and ensuring the clarity of laws and regulations.

Minister of Administrative Development Muhideen Touq said this seminar and a previous one, held last month, were "a national debate" and generated criticism. Some people claimed that the two seminars were "unnecessary" and described them as "damaging to Jordan's international image," said Mr. Touq.

Rejecting these allegations, Mr. Touq stressed that a national strategy against corruption was a precaution. "We may not have a major problem now, but in 10-15 years' time we might look back and regret not having a national strategy," Mr. Touq said.

Participants from the private sector welcomed the open dialogue on corruption and called on the government to reduce its interventionist policies.

"The less intervention from civil servant the less corruption we will find," Hamdi Tabba, a former minister of industry and trade and Chairman of Jordanian Businessmen Association, told the Jordan Times.

Participants stressed that the government should have a long-term strategy to evaluate the areas of "economic illnesses," such as unemployment, low standard of living and inequality of the distribution of wealth are breeders of corruption," said Basam Saket, a former minister of economy.

He added that if the government leaves matters to the private sector things could improve. John MacGregor, a senior country officer responsible for the Middle East and North Africa country operations at the World Bank, told the Jordan Times that the bank "will not push" the government in its fight

against corruption. The reason for such a stand, he said, was that the World Bank believes that the strategy against corruption "must be led by Jordanian minds and hearts."

The World Bank financed the travel costs of experts attending the seminar, but Mr. MacGregor insisted, the event "is not the World Bank's show."

"We will take our proper role and support the initiative taken by the government," said Mr. MacGregor, adding that the bank will not dictate any solutions.

Also from the World Bank, Robert Beschel, a public sector management consultant, said that the draft of a national strategy which was recommended last month and concentrates on the role of the civil servants, media and the judiciary lacks a de-

(Continued on page 7)

Battle is on for Rabin murder video

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli and international news organisations on Sunday contested for the rights to broadcast an amateur videotape of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination.

The videotape, filmed by a 37-year-old Tel Aviv man who insisted on his anonymity, shows confessed assassin Yigal Amir shooting Mr. Rabin at pointblank range as he left a Tel Aviv peace rally on Nov. 4.

The negotiations for the broadcast rights were conducted via lawyers for the anonymous cameraman. The asking price reportedly ranged between \$100,000 and three times that amount.

Also Sunday, the Tel Aviv district court turned down a request by Amir's attorneys to delay his trial by 60 days, the justice ministry said.

Lawyer Mordechai Offri had said the postponement was necessary to give him time to examine evidence against his client, but the court said proceedings would start Tuesday as planned.

The existence of the videotape was revealed only last week, and the video was shown to the commission investigating the security breakdown that led to Mr. Rabin's death.

"The commercialising of this is not at all pleasant," said Mordechai Kirshenbaum, director of Israel Broadcast Authority that runs the state-owned Channel One television.

"But the archival value of this material for the coming years and Israeli history is very high."

Mr. Kirshenbaum said that Channel One had joined forces with an Israeli daily and a foreign news organisation in order to make the demanded sum.

A similar competing group organised around Channel One's main rival, Channel Two.

Neither Mr. Kirshenbaum or lawyers for the cameraman were ready to say how much money was involved.

"He expects the price to be appropriate to the tape's special value and if the price is not appropriate, he will keep the rights to the tape and at some stage hand it over to a historian," said attorney Yoram Samuel, who represents the cameraman.

Journalists and the lawyers who viewed the footage said the cameraman focused on Amir appearing to hide behind a potted plant with his hands behind his back.

"Anyone who sees the tape sees that the man is suspicious," Mr. Samuel said on Israel Radio.

The Telegraph newspaper said the videotape shows the mortally wounded Rabin struggling for long seconds to get up off the ground and enter his car while his back remained exposed.

In an interview with the Associated Press, attorney Aric Aubach predicted that "in a few days the public in Israel and the world will see the tape."

Mr. Rabin's widow, Leah, told army radio on Saturday that she was not interested in viewing the videotape.

"I did not know that the murder of Yitzhak Rabin was documented by video. And, of course, I do not want to see these pictures. It is too difficult. It is hard enough for me to deal with what has happened," she said.

COLUMN

Soccer stars face Alzheimer's risk — survey

LONDON (R) — Soccer stars could be at greater risk than others of contracting Alzheimer's disease after years of heading the ball and being hit in accidental clashes, a scientist says. Dr. Jon Spear said the cumulative effect could cause long-term brain damage similar to that suffered by boxers. "A football weighs about 400 grammes (almost one pound) and can travel at up to 80 miles an hour. This creates a significant force on impact with the head," he said. Dr. Spear, a London consultant in geriatric psychiatry, was quoted in the Sunday Independent as saying: "Football players are also susceptible to concussion as a result of the clash of heads."

He cited Norwegian studies showing that professional footballers were twice as likely as others to show deficits in concentration, memory and judgement. Republican of Ireland striker Tony Cascarino, asked to comment, said: "Even if there was proof, I don't think it would make much difference. It is a risk people are prepared to take. They think of their careers and carry on taking the money."

Family taken hostage is freed after 3 weeks

TORONTO (AFP) — An ethnic Chinese family has been freed by police after being held hostage for three weeks by members of an organised crime group, police said Saturday. Li Xiong Yang, 73, his wife Xiu Ying Chan, 63, and their daughter Zhan Ning Yang, 32, were reported missing on Nov. 24 when they were taken from their home by four armed men to an apartment east of Toronto. They were freed late Friday. The kidnappers had asked for several millions of dollars in ransom money, police said. Police mounted a widespread investigation and succeeded in freeing the family without any bloodshed. Three men and one woman have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping and police are still looking for a fourth suspect, said Sergeant Terry Knox of the Toronto Police Department. Sgt. Knox refused to comment on the motive for the kidnapping, but a confidential source said the case was linked to a drug investigation. The same source said the hostage takers suspected that the son of Li Xiong Yang cooperated with police in an operation that led to the seizure of six kilos (about 15 pounds) of heroin earlier this year.

Days getting longer, scientists say

LONDON (R) — Days have been getting longer since the time of the dinosaur when days ran for just 23 hours, scientists say. With the earth now rotating more slowly, the world's time lords will add an extra "leap second" to the end of 1995. Geologists at Australia's Adelaide University, quoted by the Sunday Times newspaper, believe that more than 600 million years ago, days were just 21 hours long. When dinosaurs first appeared 250 million years ago, days were up to 23 hours, they said. Dr. Leslie Morrison of Britain's Royal Greenwich Observatory also analysed records of lunar and solar eclipses to calculate that the world span faster before. So the Central Bureau of the International Earth Rotation Service in Paris is to balance time at the end of this month by adding on an extra second, the paper said.

Algerian dailies reappear

PARIS (R) — Algeria's independent newspapers returned to newsstands on Sunday after a four-day strike to protest against a government suspension of a sister daily.

The papers urged President Liamine Zeroual to protect freedom of the press and said cracking down on independent publications could deprive him of popular support.

The Interior Ministry ordered the French-language daily Liberte to shut down on Dec. 11 for 15 days, blaming it for carrying repeated tendentious information. The newspaper had earlier published a pen-profile of Mr. Zeroual's senior aide, former General Mohammed Betchine.

An Algiers court later convicted the director general and a journalist of the newspaper of repeated publication of false information about a senior official and gave them suspended prison sentences. Liberte's Director General Outoudert Abrassus was given a four-month suspended prison sentence.

Calling the ministry decision an "arbitrary decision," editors of other independent newspapers replied by shutting down their own papers last Tuesday to protest the measures.

Algeria's authorities have cut for themselves huge powers over the press amid the government's struggle against armed militants bent on turning Algeria into a strict Islamic state.

Up to 40,000 people, including more than 60 journalists and media employees, have been killed in the four-year-old conflict.

Several newspapers were closed for various periods since early 1993 when the authorities tailored a law allowing them to shut publications for what they might see as threats to the public order and the country's high interests.

France back on track as strikes run out of steam

PARIS (R) — France's worst wave of strikes for a decade was running out of steam on Sunday and public sector workers seemed ready to ease the pressure on Prime Minister Alain Juppe, at least over Christmas.

SNCF state railways said 50-60 per cent of trains were running in most regions of France and services in the Paris suburbs were also back on track. Nine of 13 lines on the city's underground metro were at least partly functioning.

Eurostar trains from London to Paris via the Channel Tunnel were also running again, although only four trains were expected from Paris to London and three the other way.

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands of people joined anti-government protest marches across the country, led by railway workers claiming to have scored a victory over the government in three weeks of strikes.

A majority of railway workers voted on Friday to start returning to work and some more militant depots voted to join them over the weekend.

But the wider public-sector strikes looked to be fizzling out without achieving their main objective, to force Mr. Juppe to ditch controversial welfare reform plans.

Louis Viannet, chief of the communist-led CGT, announced at a mass march in Paris that another day of action was planned for Tuesday, two days ahead of a "labour summit" between union leaders and Mr. Juppe.

Other union leaders were lukewarm about the call, and some suggested that the next round of protests be organised for January, after the Christmas and New Year break.

The strikes have involved various sectors, including postal services, power supply and schools, but transport shutdowns have had the most visible effect, virtually crippling Paris and hitting shops hard ahead of the holiday season.

Mr. Juppe made significant concessions to rail workers by freezing a plan to restructure the SNCF state railways and backing down on reforming pension systems that allow some train drivers to retire at

open borders and trade.

There is likely to be a lot of arguing ahead over the windswept Heights.

Israel says the international boundary was set in 1916 under the British-Sykes-Picot agreement carving up the Middle East between the great powers before the end of World War I.

"Its origins were in 1916 as an emanation of the Sykes-Picot agreement re-modelling the area after the Ottoman empire," foreign ministry spokesman Daniel Shek told Reuters.

That line keeps the vital Sea of Galilee well within Israel.

Syria, Israel said in April, insists the line is that of the 1949 armistice after the first Arab-Israeli war, the line Damascus controlled on the eve of the 1967 war.

That line would extend Syrian control well down the Heights to, in places, within metres of the sea, a key Israeli water source, population and tourist centre. It is likely Israel will fight hard for its definition.

Key facts about the Heights:

— Area of the plateau. 1,158 square kilometres.

— Strategic situation. Southern Syria and Damascus.

What is a full Golan Heights withdrawal?

TEL AVIV (R) — There are two definitions — one Syrian and one Israeli — of what constitutes a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

More than four years of peace talks are stalled over the strategic plateau Israel seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

The sides are to resume peace talks suspended for six months on Dec. 27. The Golan will be the hardest nut to crack.

Syria demands Israel commit to full withdrawal. Israel has said it cannot detail a pullback's scope until Damascus says if it envisages peace as full ties,

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